

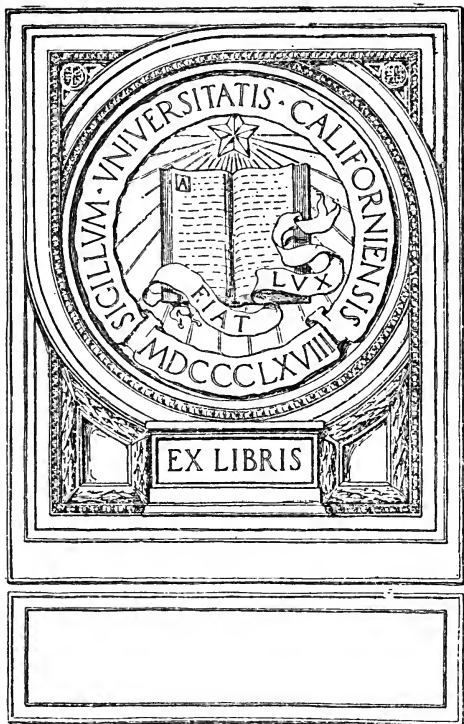
THE DIARY OF AN  
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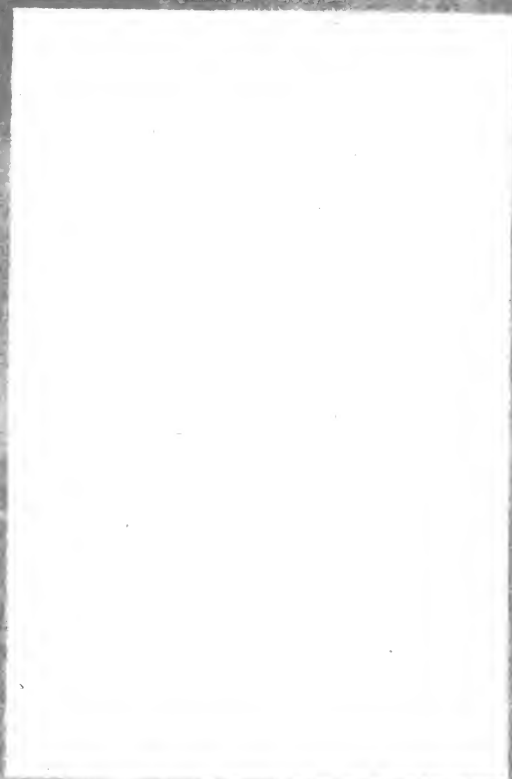
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THE DIARY OF AN  
ENGLISH RESIDENT  
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WAR TIME    ♡   ♡   ♡

*SECOND SERIES, 1915*



# THE DIARY OF AN ENGLISH RESIDENT IN FRANCE DURING WAR TIME    ♡    ♡    ♡    ♡

*SECOND SERIES*

*JAN.—DEC. 1915*

BY

ROWLAND STRONG

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# THE DIARY OF AN ENGLISH RESIDENT IN FRANCE DURING WAR TIME : 1915

## CHAPTER I

*The New Year in Nice : A typical southern French family : The soubrette : French opinion of the British Army and Navy : England's commercial preoccupations : The German prisoners in Corsica : Frost-bite : An ambassadorial protest : Nice in 1870 : Peaceful Provence : A vivid dream : The Niçois dead : An opinion of the Belgians : Joffre's Cromwellian gesture : Letter from a Captain of Marine Fusiliers : Peace intrigues*

### NICE

*Jan. 1st to Jan. 7th.*—The New Year opened in dank and chilly weather.

I took some flowers to Madame N——. She is getting anxious about her son Jacques, a French interpreter attached to the British forces, for it is now long since she has had news of him. He had expressed himself delighted with his English comrades.

Her stepson, Maurice, who though past military age has come all the way from Timbuctoo, where he has a flourishing business, to resume his corporal's rank in the army, and after a few arduous weeks

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in the trenches is now here on sick leave, tried to reassure her, spreading out maps, disputing distances, but how hollow are all these consolatory arguments even to those who make them !

The whole N—— family are such staunch fighters that one may count on finding any one of them where danger lies. N—— himself fought a duel here at the beginning of last year with General Goiran, Mayor of Nice, and now Military Governor of Rouen, and wounded him, humoristically. His youngest, René, though only just eighteen, is already a probationary lieutenant, promoted from the ranks since the outbreak of war. It is a fire-eating family, typical of the south, of Nice, the birthplace of Garibaldi, exuberant, full to the brim of broad fun and the milk of human kindness, trilingual, for French is equally their mother tongue with Italian and Nissard, always active, physically and intellectually. Madame N——'s fox-terrier "Topsy" is the son of the late King Edward's "Cæsar," and to maintain peace between him and two big police dogs, who form part of the household, and are not always willing to recognise his princely prerogatives, especially when the family is at meals, requires qualities of decision and tact of no mean order.

Madame N—— is also the mistress of one of those charming survivals of old French life, the "soubrette," the youthful, confidential servant, who is treated almost like a daughter, and mixes freely and gaily in the conversation when waiting at table, but so naturally and simply that her interjections are never obtrusive. This is Mademoiselle Paulette. Madame N—— finds time to nurse



the wounded, to write charmingly for a large circle of readers, who shower tributes of admiration upon her from all parts of the world in the shape of post cards and flowers, and to direct a large house, which is the home port of two families. She does this with a science and skill essentially French. She still finds leisure to knit socks and mufflers for soldiers, and stitch bandages for ambulances. Her garden all the year round is a paradise of colour and perfume, such as is only possible when taste and knowledge are in partnership with the Riviera sun.

The N——s are a representative French southern family, and for that reason their opinion on passing events is precious to any one anxious to test the real pulse of French thought.

It poured heavily with rain all the afternoon, during which we discussed and rediscussed the position and performances of the British Army. The belief here is that not more than 180,000 British soldiers at the utmost have reached the front. This is accepted on the whole as satisfactory, seeing that Great Britain possessed no preliminary organisation enabling her to put a large army in the field, and that all the men, and particularly the officers, have to be trained.

Still there is no doubt an undercurrent of feeling that neither the military nor the naval effort of Great Britain has been what it might have been, or what the French expected of it. The women particularly hold this view, or perhaps it is that the men are less ready to express it. With a conviction that it is they who will have borne the chief brunt of the German onslaught, the French, or at

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any rate a section of them, are already claiming as their due the lion's share of the indemnity which the Germans must ultimately pay, and, as Madame N—— declared to me again, the fear is there may not be enough German money to go round. I, too, am reduced to reiterating that Great Britain may be relied on not to take a narrow or selfish view of what her share should be relatively to that of the other Allies, and that though neither the British nor the French Navy is doing sensational work of the kind that would thrill the public at a moving-picture show, by maintaining the mastery of the seas they have made victory for the Allies possible, and defeat for the Germans certain.

The destruction of German commerce and the capture by the British of the German colonies is recognised as a great achievement, but the average Frenchman gets a little restive if it is too much insisted on, for he sees no proportionate advantages to France. If you tell him that the reason of recruiting being apparently slow in Great Britain is largely due to the manufacture of ammunition, guns, and warships having immobilised a vast number of skilled workmen who cannot be spared at the front, he does not dispute the justice of the contention, but you can detect beneath his studiously polite and sympathetic demeanour a critical reserve. He is thinking that the English are too much pre-occupied with taking advantage of the present unique chance to make money and snatch Germany's trade from her while the other nations do the fighting.

I asked N—— whether he knew anything about the German prisoners' encampment in Corsica. He

said that the largest was at Corti, but he added, with a laugh, that he thought there could be very few of the Germans left. "You see," he said, "the Corsicans have a way of their own of settling scores. Whenever the news reaches them that a Corsican has been killed at the front, the Corsican vendetta comes into play, and the relations of the deceased soldier wander out into the neighbourhood of the camp, and between nightfall and sunrise the prisoners' roll-call suffers a notable diminution. As the Corsicans have lost heavily in the war, I am not sure that you will find any Germans left in Corti, but if you go there, and you find any, 'tu pourras aussi en faire une brochette' (you might make a skewerful yourself)." Of course this is a typical tale of the Midi and should be taken with a large handful of salt.

From the 2nd to the 7th, the military situation, as far as was to be judged from the official "communiqués" and the information supplied by friends from the front, remained stagnant. The weather in Nice gradually improved. I received a post card from Comte J. de B——, who has been in the first lines, but is now in an infirmary with both feet frozen. In my last letter to him I warned him against treating frost-bite with warm water, and I trust that this advice reached him in time. It came from an experienced source, though from what we are told here by wounded men this frost-bite in the trenches is not in all cases real frost-bite, but a violent congestion of the circulatory system of the lower limbs due to long immersion in icy cold water. This may produce gangrene, just like real frost-bite, if not promptly treated.

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The impression that I had some days ago that from certain cosmopolitan quarters which have their agents in France a systematic effort was being made to unduly minimise the British naval and military effort, and to spread a belief that the British Government was scheming to make a separate peace independently of its Allies, though pooh-poohed here by the eminent journalist G. N—— and other members of our Committee of Nations, is now amply confirmed by the New Year's speech delivered by the British Ambassador at Petrograd. The Ambassador makes plain reference to these intrigues, which in Russia, at any rate, are traceable no doubt to the strong German influences which still exist there, and flatly denies the reports which they have given rise to. He also warns his hearers and the public from giving credence to any insinuations of a similar character which may be spread abroad in future, and he makes the needed defence of our naval operations. That this will stop the intrigues of which the Ambassador complains is too much to hope. But at any rate open-minded people, with no axe of their own to grind, now know what they can go upon.

I received a letter from N. F——, the brilliant English portrait-painter and illustrator, to whom *Yoyo's Animal Friends* owes "le plus clair de ses mérites." He writes: "I have a lovely piece of shell at my elbow—a letter-weight inscribed 'siege of Paris 70-71.' Will you one day find for me its mate, to be fastened above it, and to bear the words 'Berlin 1915'?"

*Jan. 8th to Jan. 14th.*—The weather has become

fine and spring-like, but it is still more changeable than is usual at Nice in this season, and whether or not this is to be attributed to the atmospheric commotions caused by the war is widely discussed, but no two people have the same opinion on the subject.

The oldest inhabitants, harking back to what Nice was at this season during the last great war of 1870, are much struck by the contrast. Nice at that time had been only recently annexed to France, and continued to consider itself Niçois first of all (as it does still), then Italian, and French only in the third degree. The war hardly affected the level tenor of its life. The theatres continued to play comedy and light opera, and there was no boycotting of German music either on the stage, in the concert-hall, or at church. Now, on the contrary, German music is rigorously taboo, and recently the ecclesiastical authorities tried publicly to justify the fact that they had allowed a selection of Händel to be performed at the Cathedral on the ground that Händel really counted as an English musician. In 1871 there was far less excitement in Nice about the war and the siege of Paris than about the question whether or not a public convenience should be allowed to remain in the neighbourhood of the Municipal Opera House. Those against it brought forward arguments based on æsthetic grounds; their opponents were equally ferocious utilitarians, and the feeling ran so high that riots were threatened, and the mayor had to appeal to the inhabitants to keep the peace among themselves, and to remember that it was the country that was at war. There were very few Niçois at the front,

for the system of universal service was not introduced into France until after the fall of the Second Empire, and the new generation of Niçois, born with the recently acquired French nationality, was not yet old enough for conscription.

The Countess and I took a long walk in the middle of the week to the summit of the hill at Gairaut, which commands a lovely view over the Mediterranean. One has the sense of having been forgotten by the world, and also to have been left behind by it. The tranquil labour on the country roads and in the fields goes on, though in a diminished degree, and with fewer workers. The very peacefulness and security have an element of solitude and mournfulness. The rose-trees are already budding in the hedges. The only sign of the war is an occasional soldier limping up the hill path with a stick, exercising a leg or a foot still stiff from the not wholly cured wound.

On the night of the 11th I dreamed very vividly that I was near the front, and that I met Comte J. de B——, from whom I recently heard that he has gone back, cured of his frost-bite, to the trenches. He was in a big grange, with hay-lofts above and stables around him, and looked very miserable, with bits of straw sticking in his hair and his clothes, and almost black in the face with dirt. When I spoke to him he only gazed mournfully, and apparently could not answer. The dream was so impressive that I have written to Comte J. de B—— and told him about it.

B—— has turned up from Paris. He is trying to disentangle the situation created by the requisitioning for military barracks of the Casinos of

Beausoleil and Mentone, of which he is director, responsibility for which is denied both by the municipal authorities, who are the landlords and gave the permission without consulting their tenants, and the military authorities, who plead "force majeure" and the exigencies of warfare. This is one of those glorious red-tape knots which are the joy of public functionaries on both sides of the Channel. B—— has returned to Paris without having untied it.

*Jan. 16th.*—The French defeat near Soissons, so close to Paris, is discouraging. The French people who talked to me about it were depressed. They are beginning to understand that the huge German war machine will require an immense effort for its destruction. N—— said that the number of Niçois killed was terrible. There was hardly a Niçois family that was not in mourning.

N—— spoke also in disparaging terms of certain Belgians. He even said they were "au-dessous de tout." There is no doubt that for reasons which I have not yet been able to fathom, the Belgians, especially in the south of France, are not popular. Their military organisation has, of course, been completely upset by the invasion, which may account for so many young Belgians not having, as it would appear, joined the colours, and I think that this is one of the causes of the dissatisfaction so frequently expressed in France. But the French are a little over-fond of making a scapegoat of any convenient foreigner who happens to be on the premises, to load on his back the responsibility for what goes wrong, and my admiration for the heroic

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resistance of the Belgians to the Hun invasion will take a good deal of upsetting.

M. Deschanel, the President of the Chamber, is reported to have said yesterday that if, after the war had begun, the "French Parliament had been kept more fully informed, France would now be in a better position." A more outrageous misstatement could hardly have been uttered; but the applause that it received from the noisier and more irresponsible deputies, whose votes had enabled M. Deschanel to retain his presidency, sufficiently explains why it was made.

There is not a particle of doubt, and historians of this war must one and all register the fact if they write seriously and with good faith, that it was the Cromwellian gesture of General Joffre, "take away that bauble," or in the actual words that suited the modern crisis, "take yourselves off to Bordeaux, and don't come back till you are sent for," that saved the situation. Now that the situation is saved, and the French Parliament being no longer a public danger, as it then was, has been suffered to return to Paris, the President of the Chamber of Deputies seeks to attenuate these facts. But the public cannot be deceived. It is universally recognised that if France was on the brink of complete ruin at the outbreak of the war, this was mainly due to the self-seeking practices and lack of principle of professional politicians. Her salvation has been worked out by her national army, by the millions of anonymous heroes, belonging to no political party in particular, who rose to the occasion, fought and laid down their lives for France, without murmur or thought of reward,



and proved, to the astonishment of a world that had been judging the French nation by its public men, that it had unsurpassed qualities of grit, and resistance, and silent calm courage, which, though no doubt always there, had apparently lain dormant until the supreme crisis arose. It is to them, and not to the Parliamentarians, that France owes it to be in far "better position" now than she has been for fifty years back, in spite of the early disasters of the campaign. And to attempt to snatch from the people their hardly won crown of glory and to fix it on his own and his Parliamentary colleagues' heads, though a characteristic enough gesture from M. Deschanel, was not allowed to pass without protest. It is creditable to the worthier sections of the French Chamber that they hissed him.

The professional politician is the same all the world over, a curse everywhere. General Joffre's greatest victory was over the French Parliament. If he, with the aid of Poincaré—to whom all honour for his splendid co-operation—had not made it impossible for a gang of corrupt and irresponsible chatterers to interfere with the military operations, "to know more," as the President of the Chamber suavely put it, France might now be, well—to adopt again the academic prose of M. Deschanel—in anything but "a better position."

*Jan. 17th.*—Madame N—— tells me that the distribution of soup in which she was interested at the Hôtel —— has finally come to an end for lack of further funds.

G. N——, the journalist, at dinner to-night at

Ghis', expressed the firm conviction that the present Parliamentary system in France would not survive the war. He thinks that a Socialist organisation will take its place.

That the Republican régime, as at present constituted, has proved itself incapable of managing the national affairs at a vital moment of crisis may be true enough ; but whether the elements composing the French Socialist party, and the principles by which they are animated would have supplied a satisfactory substitute seems to be a very open question. What is clear is that in spite of politicians and the theories of doctrinaires, the nation by a great and almost unexpected, because unprecedented, effort has saved itself and now has its future in its own hands. What will be the result ? This no one for the present can foresee. That changes will be made, when all comes to be known, is probable enough. France has endured a rude awakening, and she may be relied upon not to fall promptly to sleep again as soon as the war is finished. But for the present, at any rate, it cannot be said that any one party, whether of the Government or the Opposition, has any particular claim upon her gratitude, or is in a position to say, "had you followed our advice, nothing of this would have happened." And to the credit of the actual Government it must be admitted that after the first temporary collapse, remedied with an admirable promptitude, which we in England would do well to imitate, by a reconstitution of the Cabinet, everything has been done that could be done to prosecute the war with loyalty and energy.

*Jan. 18th.*—The weather has suddenly undergone a change and become much colder. The mountains opposite my windows are covered with snow. A letter from my dear friend P. D——, now fighting as a captain of Marine Fusiliers. He writes: "le 12 Jan. 1915. Mon cher ami,—J'aurais voulu répondre plus tôt à votre bonne lettre, et surtout donner une suite à 'notre projet,' mais maintenant encore il m'est impossible de le faire. Tous ces temps derniers les bruits les plus alarmants avaient circulé sur le sort de notre brigade dont quelques esprits chagrins prédisaient la dissolution. Pour le moment—et puisque depuis hier nous avons un drapeau—je pense ce danger écarté; mais il est maintenant question de nous retirer de notre actuel champs d'opérations pour nous utiliser ailleurs. Il faut attendre qu'un peu de stabilité se produise pour que nous puissions reprendre nos projets.

"Une autre raison de mon silence est que nous avons été bien occupés ces temps derniers. Nous avons eu assez chaud en deux occasions et plusieurs de nos camarades y sont restés. Des 24 capitaines de compagnie du début, il n'en reste plus un qui n'ait été touché. Ce cent pour cent nous rend assez vains—bien que cet holocauste soit peu en proportion avec les résultats obtenus.

"Êtes-vous vraiment bien résolu à goûter de la tranchée? C'est un mélange de boue et de sang dont un grand nombre ne réussit pas à s'accommoder. . . . Les pauvres fantassins sont bien éprouvés par la colique—et l'infanterie, cette reine des batailles, connaît journellement la honte de se trousser sous les quolibets et de révéler les troubles de ses

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entrailles. Mais ces détails n'ont plus aucune importance devant la joie essentielle de bafouer la vie pour rendre témoignage à ce qui dépasse la vie.

“ Je me hâte de dire que cette joie n'est pas accessible à tous les ‘ Jean le Gouin ’ (tant nous sommes enfoncés dans la matière), et même pour les plus braves, il est des jours où une bonne trique passée au feu n'est pas inutile. . . .”

Thus the one captain of Marine Fusiliers who has escaped unscathed is my friend D——. I had already seen in the report of a Japanese journalist published by an illustrated paper in Paris that all but one of the naval officers commanding companies of Marine Fusiliers had been killed or wounded and it seemed too much to hope that D—— was this fortunate he. How long will his luck last? The real reason for the plan, attributed to the military authorities by D—— in his letter, to disband the Brigade is a more glorious one than his modesty permits him to explain. I am told by those who know that the extravagant bravery of these naval officers, who persist in fighting on shore as if they were on board ship, with a complete contempt for cover and the other precautions which the land soldiers have been taught and learned to take, is the cause of this “ hundred per cent.” mortality among them. “ C'est splendide, mais ce n'est pas la guerre,” and as nothing will teach them prudence, the French War Office is seriously thinking of giving them back to the Navy. No doubt the natural spirit of emulation between the Navy and the Army has inspired this suicidal audacity, but it has entailed a terrible waste of valuable lives.

*Jan. 19th.*—It is fine but bitterly cold, unusually so for this part of the world at this season. There is a curious article in an English paper which says: "There can be only one ending to the war, and that is the driving back of the Huns from France and Belgium into their own territory, and we have learned enough to be quite certain that this will mean a supreme effort on the part of the Allies. . . . It is not enough to keep the invader at bay. He must be driven out, and to accomplish this we shall need every able-bodied man of military age. . . . We cannot be satisfied with the present deadlock, which means the possession of nearly all Belgium and a slice of Northern France by the enemy. . . ." It would appear from this that there is a section of people in England playing up for a peace on condition that Germany abandons the country she has invaded. It would be downright treason to her Allies, however, if England were to consent to such a thing. From the very first the English have made it plain through their most authorised mouthpieces that they will be satisfied with no peace which does not make it impossible for Germany ever to begin such a war again, and the people in England may be assured that this is the minimum which the people in France will make up their minds to. But to attain this result a great deal more is obviously needed than merely driving Germany back beyond her own frontiers, as this article seems to suggest. It looks as if the pinch of money losses was beginning to affect a certain body of persons in England, who are now "out for" a cheap peace.

## CHAPTER II

*Houston Stewart Chamberlain : Wagnerism and Antisemitism : How Bismarck would have dealt with the Jews : Bismarck's Jewish blood : English music : The Continental infection : Jeremy Collier : German music : The miracle of the seven devils : German trash of all kinds to disappear : Francine : An American General : Champagne : German treatment of British prisoners : Uhde, the spy : Verdigris and bullets : The London film : A dream confirmed*

Jan. 19th.—Renewed attention is being attracted to the personality of a well-known Germanophile writer, a Mr. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who, after marrying one of the daughters of Wagner and writing a number of books vilifying the Jews, has now thrown in his lot wholly with Germany, and turned his back upon his native country. I note, however, that those who are denouncing Mr. Chamberlain seem to know but little about him, or the subjects that he writes about. They have failed to indicate wherein lie his real weaknesses and inconsistencies.

That Mr. Chamberlain dislikes the English and abhors the Jews, and proportionately admires the Germans, is his own business ; his real insignificance deprives this pose of all importance except to himself and Germany, but there is a certain comic

value in the fact that this zealous and industrious Anti-Semitic scribe has married a wife with a strong leaven of Jewish blood. Wagner was of partial Jewish descent, which may very likely have accounted, as it often, though not always, does, for his violent hatred of the Jews. Other examples of this apparent self-contradiction among Anti-Semites of Semitic origin are Edmond Drumont, author of *La France Juive*, and the German philosopher Schopenhauer. It is, in fact, one of the points made by the Anti-Semites that the Jew "métis" or half-blood Jew often looks upon the full-blooded Jew with the same contempt as the mulatto upon the full-blooded negro, whom he calls a "black nigger." It is true that the black nigger uses the expression "white nigger" to the mulatto, the quadroon or the octoroon with equal emphasis and offensive intent. Black blood notoriously dominates white blood when intermixed, and it is also an ethnological dogma with the Anti-Semites that a strain of Jew blood is always sufficient to establish type. Thus Mr. Chamberlain's children, should he have any, will, in the minds of strict-principled, uncompromising Anti-Semites like himself, count as Jews as absolutely as if they were of the pure race of Moses and Aaron, without having been mongrelised by the intermixture of Mr. Houston Stewart Chamberlain's vague Anglo-Saxon or Celtic-Scotch blood. If they inherit his opinions, they will have no alternative but to hate and despise their father for having married their mother, and he in his turn has no logical escape from hating them. The only remedy to the situation would be mutual murder or collective suicide. It is true

that Bismarck is credited with having said (probably in his cups) that the best way to solve the Jewish problem in Germany and satisfy the Anti-Semites was for German nobles to marry the daughters of all the rich Jewish bankers, and once in secure possession of their dowries to strangle their wives. He was nevertheless very proud of his own Jewish blood, which, as he tells us in his Memoirs, he derived from his maternal grandfather, the Jew banker Menken, without which, he adds, the blood of the Bismarcks would have been good for nothing.

Wagner insulted France in 1870, and another of the leitmotivs of Mr. Houston Stewart Chamberlain's treason is his Wagnerism. I once knew an Englishman who thought himself competent to write a biography of Velasquez because he had married a distant relation of Whistler's. Somewhat in the same way, Mr. Chamberlain is a Wagnerite to the extent of having not only married into Wagner's family, but of having espoused all the blare and tinsel and gas of the most roaring, raving, egregious humbug and commercially engineered swindle that has ever figured in the world of Art.

This infection of modern German music, and of Wagner in particular, has, it is sad to say, communicated itself to a section of our own people and also to the French, though, as regards the French, the harm never penetrated very deep, and a complete recovery is now well in sight. With the English, it is to be feared, the cure, owing to our national pigheadedness and snobbish reverence for institutions, our worship of idols, particularly those most recently set up, will be longer in the working, and this is the more to be regretted because the



frank and simple-souled English, when untouched by the Continental infection, with their acutely sensitive emotionality, their intellectual serenity, their high standards of morals and manners, were really the only people who ever understood music. There were at one time, as we all know, native composers in England of beautiful English music, but the English ceased to compose when Continental music, with all its tinselled vulgarity, was introduced, together with other forms of Continental decadence, equally vicious and ugly. It came in in the suite of Charles the Second with D'Urfé's operas as an aid to and an expression of lewdness, and was vigorously denounced by the non-juror Bishop, Jeremy Collier, in his famous *Essay on the Immorality of the Stage*, which Macaulay afterwards praised so highly. But apart from Jeremy Collier's lead in the matter, the English have never sincerely cottoned to this profane Continental music, for it expressed nothing that was spiritually within them. The English, with an insularity which is wholly admirable, for it isolates them from that collective spirit, that "âme commune" characteristic of lower forms of animal life which survives in the Continental dross and uniform habiliment of yodling and dancing peasants, have always been convinced at the bottom of their hearts that the only music worthy of the name is sacred music, which gives vibrating voice to the church, with whose architectural proportions, if really Christian and Catholic, its own laws of harmony and numbers are in closest relationship. The instrument which the Englishman still best loves and understands is the church organ.

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Having failed to sufficiently impress the English with the blare and bluster and hullabaloo of their music, the Germans with their habitual puerile and impudent ignorance have set the English down as a non-musical people. They failed with their natural obtuseness in all matters psychical to understand that what was repellent to every finer feeling of the Englishman and a denial of his claim on intellectual individuality was the attempt to impose collective and uniform emotions outside the realm of Faith and of Divine Love. Man, collectively speaking, is only agreed in his Love of God when he is agreed in anything. Any attempt to make him believe, feel, or think collectively outside of that one sphere of mental and emotional union must result in a clash and a crash of horrible cacophony, of *dischords*, an anarchy of the soul, a diabolic nightmare. When Our Lord cast out seven devils from a man possessed who immediately reincarnated themselves in the carcasses of a brood of swine, this was very probably the symbolic foreshadowing of the arrival of Wagner and his disciples in the sphere of music. Here, by the way, is a subject of "sacred" opera, which might be recommended for future adaptation to Herr Richard Strauss.

"All music," I heard Claude Debussy say years ago—and he was one of the first to militate against Wagnerism—"is contained in Bach." And all Bach, it might be added, is in Milton. The English, who have produced the greatest poetry in the world, may for that reason have felt less the need of musical composition. Poetry, containing all music, goes further than music because it is intellectually articulate, does not require translation

from an inferior into a higher sense. That a man should be emotionally and spiritually affected, be roused to beautiful deeds and respond to noble thoughts by the spoken or written word reaching him articulately, appealing to his heart and soul by a process which is, in its supreme achievement, almost purely intellectual, is well, and does honour to speaker and listener, reader and writer. But that this effort should be produced, or even aimed at, by banging on the pigskin of a drum is but a poor business for all concerned. The brain so affected and governed, the emotions thus started into being are of the same inferior quality as those of a swarm of bees collectively roused to action by beating on a tin-kettle, or of a dog from whom any piano-thumper or tootler on a penny whistle can extract a death-howl.

With the disappearance from our midst of German waiters and German cooking and German trash of all kinds, it may be reasonably hoped that the already shaken influence of German music may go too, and that English music, not English imitation of German music, which was doubly a poor thing, will come to its own again. In the meanwhile we can, without any feeling of regret, make a free present to Germany of the Jew Wagner's Anglo-Scotch son-in-law.

*Jan. 20th.*—Our Swiss Delegate to the Nice Committee of Nations, Count de H——, is doing his "little bit" by collecting, for a special society, worn clothes, boots, linen, etc., of any description for the use of the army. He says that everything comes in useful, even if utterly unwearable as a

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garment, for it is then cut up to be used for patching, and so forth. A bevy of clever French girls work with ceaseless diligence in what was formerly the restaurant of the Hôtel Régence in utilising these patches for the repair of the uniforms of soldiers who have been at the front. To the unaccustomed lay eye it is a pleasure, made up of admiration, amusement, and a measure of love, to watch from the street their deft fingers, and the incredible ingenuity with which every morsel of material is used, whether of cloth or linen or leather, to increase the neat pile of blue and red uniforms, completely "*remis à neuf*," made as good or better than new, which rises higher and higher as the day wears on. And the bright, smiling, yet earnest girl faces! And the movements which are always elegant, harmonious, sedate yet gay, gentle but energetic! Ah, *Francine*! The world knows no one like thee!

*Jan. 21st.*—I was hailed in the Avenue de la Gare by my old friend the American General X——, who, after many adventures, has just got back from Carlsbad, looking ill. He was supposed to have been lost entirely. The Belgians, when he had escaped from Germany, requisitioned his motor-car, which the Germans subsequently captured, so he fears that he will never recover it. E——, a former Minister of War, whom he knows, has told him that when he last saw Joffre, which was a couple of days ago, Joffre declared that he was waiting for Kitchener's Army to join him before making a general move forward on the Western front.

P——, a Reims champagne representative, whom

we occasionally meet at the Café —, says that the Germans have destroyed huge quantities of champagne in the cellars of the champagne district, at Reims, Epernay, etc., and their favourite "modus operandi" was to chuck one full bottle against a whole stack of others. The bursting of this bottle acted as a bomb, causing the whole stack to come down with a crash and a smash, and each bottle as it burst spread further ruin by its explosion. About 500,000 francs damage has been done in this way alone. The cellars of Mumm, the German manufacturer of champagne, were pillaged before the Germans got to Reims. In spite of what the papers say, it has not been possible to gather in all the champagne grape crop. He thinks champagne is certain to go up in price. Perhaps he merely hopes it will.

*Jan. 22nd.*—De B——, in common with every Frenchman and intelligent foreigner even among the neutrals, is surprised at the utter indifference shown by the British Government for the cruel treatment of the British prisoners by the Germans. That they are being shamefully martyred is beyond question. The letters from French prisoners received here supply ample proof of it. But it is characteristic of British hypocrisy masquerading as magnanimity to be entirely unmoved by the sufferings of one's own flesh and blood. One cuts a much more splendid figure—and it's quite inexpensive and easy—when one only interferes to secure the comfort and well-being of the dear enemy. What a noble gesture that is! And as a general rule it can be done at other people's expense, which makes

it more advantageous still. In order to excuse their sheer laziness and real callousness (if it be not something viler), the British Government argues that reprisals would only result in worse vengeance, an endless sequence of tit-for-tat, with the last word for the Germans, who place no limit on barbarity. But this is a nonsensical argument. There is no need to undertake reprisals against irresponsible German prisoners. I reminded de B—— of the late Lord Salisbury's message, when Kruger threatened to hang a certain number of British officers during the Transvaal War. "If you touch a hair of their heads," telegraphed Lord Salisbury, "*I will hold you personally responsible.*" Old Kruger, whose impudent threat had no doubt been originally suggested to him by the Kaiser, recognised the danger of following the German advice, and gave in at once. The German Emperor—and all the members of the Committee of Nations approve this view—should be officially informed through the United States Embassy that he will be held personally responsible for further atrocities. There is no absolute reason why The Hague Tribunal should not be given effective powers as a criminal court, the difficulty, however, being that the personages who compose it could never be relied upon to act with impartiality and due severity.

General X——, who is now nominated United States Delegate to the Committee of Nations in Nice, though, owing to his state of health, his reports and views have to be obtained through a rogatory commission of which I am the sole member, is concerned at the fate of a former friend of his, the famous Herr Uhde, who is now suspected of

having been a spy. For some years past no man has cut a more sensational figure at Monte Carlo and in the south of France than Uhde, the son of an American mother and a German father. He had been an officer in a crack German regiment of Hussars, and with the help of the gambling tables at Monte Carlo had "gone through" several fortunes.

"The last time I saw him," said the General, "he had an income of £6000 a year, and was living with a mistress who was the daughter of an American admiral. When almost at his last financial gasp he had taken over the crumbling affairs of 'Smith's Bank' at Monte Carlo, pulled them together in some miraculous fashion, which showed that he was a financial genius of the first order, though he had never studied finance, and finally sold his interests in the bank to the Comptoir d'Escompte for the annual sum on which he now subsists. I can't for one moment believe that the man was a spy." The authorities, however, are apparently convinced that he was. He had, before the war broke out, been signalised as one by Léon Daudet in the *Action Française*, and had brought a libel suit to prove his innocence. But the trial of the case had been interrupted by the war. It now appears that in the splendid house and grounds in which he resided at Hyères elaborate architectural arrangements had been made for espionage purposes. Big concrete platforms had been built into the gardens for the mounting of heavy German siege guns which would have commanded the naval port of Toulon, and these were disguised as water-works for the play of coloured fountains, which delighted the eyes of the prominent official French-

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men of the neighbourhood at the gorgeous entertainments to which Uhde invited them, and to which they willingly went. These splendid gardens have now been sequestered, and all their Maskelyne and Cook tricks revealed. Uhde in the meanwhile is in confinement, but so great is his occult influence—according, at any rate, to the story current here—that whether guilty or not, nothing more disagreeable than confinement to a concentration camp is likely to happen to him.

*Jan. 23rd.*—The Pope's manifesto strikes people in Nice as very "political" and journalistic, and unequal to the occasion.

In the afternoon I met young V——, whose father is editor of the *Petit Journal*, a huge, ruddy-faced, young Norman sergeant, who, having been more or less wounded, is in convalescence at Nice at the American Hospital. According to his account the French are not taking "dum-dum" bullets "lying down." He described a method that he imposes on his own men for covering their bullets with verdigris, the details of which I will cheerfully make a present of to Sir Stanley Buckmaster. Of course the verdigris would tend to aggravate a wound. He confirmed from his own experience and observation what we have heard on all sides now that the German and French soldiers have a tendency to fraternise after a fashion when their trenches are close together. They come out unarmed, and French chocolate and newspapers are exchanged for German cigars. He said that the peasantry in the country, near the Argonne forest, where he had been fighting, complained that the English soldiers helped themselves



too freely to farm produce. This must have been a rumour that had reached them from some other part of the line, for few if any British troops have been in the Argonne, but V—— agreed with me that no doubt these complaints came from people who had tried to overcharge the British soldier and take advantage of his ignorance of the language and of local prices. He said that the attitude of the peasantry of the Argonne towards the French soldier had been little less than abominable, and that when the farmers refused to sell their provender to the French troops, the commanding officer almost always ordered the seizure of everything that was required, which would not then be paid for.

*Jan. 24th.*—A dull and sunless Sunday. A suspicion is gathering ground here, and apparently all over France, that Kitchener's Army is much smaller than has hitherto been supposed. The situation on the Western frontier is not giving satisfaction.

*Jan. 25th.*—There was great jubilation over the British naval victory and the sinking of the *Blücher*. Our Spanish Delegate, the Marquis de B——, who says that every morning that he learns of the sinking of a German ship it fills him with such complete satisfaction as to take away his appetite for breakfast, declared at 11 A.M. that he had felt all the morning as if he had swallowed a whole turkey. B——, who has turned up in the Quixotic hope of disentangling the red-tape knot in which the military authorities and the municipal councils of Beausoleil and Mentone have tied up his casinos, insisted on my dining with him at the Hôtel ——, of which he is

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one of the directors. He said it was the best food in Nice. Old experience has taught me to be very incredulous about "best food," especially in hotels. It was horribly bad, and it is indeed curious to see travelling and travelled people sitting with an air of splendour and contentment with a background of palm leaves and upholsterer's magnificence, and electric light, munching stale fish without the slightest thought of protesting, and apparently as if they liked it. The Corsican wine, supplied gratis with the "table d'hôte," costs, so B—— told me triumphantly, 25 centimes a quart. I was surprised that any definite valuation of it was possible. Murder, like Art, has no market price. The manager, whom I subsequently congratulated on the excellence of his catering, said modestly, but very significantly: "*Hé bien! nous sommes en guerre, monsieur! Nous nous défendons.*" And it's clearly a war in which very little quarter is given to the enemy.

*Jan. 26th.*—We learn that the British naval commander's threat at Alexandretta that he will hold the Turkish commander Djemeel Pacha personally responsible if he should commit outrages on the Christian population "has intimidated him." Of course it has. A similar threat, if our Government had the sense or the courage to use it, would intimidate the German Emperor.

*Jan. 27th.*—There is only one resource for the majority of people in Nice who are in search of distraction and amusement, and that is the cinema. There are concerts on the Jetée, but it is rare for

any one to have the heart now to listen to the profane music of the theatre. So I allowed the Countess to drag me this afternoon to the cinema, and came away from it swearing never to be inveigled into such a chamber of horrors again. It is bad enough to have one's natural sleep disturbed by almost constant nightmares, but an afternoon's entertainment during which one is, more or less, burnt to death after falling with wonderful realism through the six floors of a modern mansion with a baby and a woman in one's arms, then to be pursued for fifteen years by "*la femme implacable*" and driven to suicide, then to be eaten up by a bear, and, after a brief experience of penal servitude, to be taken through the towns devastated by the Huns in Belgium—all this sends one home in a state of premature senile decay, with a splitting headache, and a broken heart. It is true that you can have all these sensations for 50 centimes in Nice, and that, since the war, films representing English scenes have become popular, and are, therefore, much more numerous. Of these, one film in particular pleased the Countess. It represented a State Procession of the Lord Mayor up Fleet Street on his way to some ceremonial function at St. Paul's, and there, right in the middle of the picture, was the little lozenge-shaped sign which hangs out from —, the last refuge in the City, nowadays, of that somewhat Bohemian type of literary man, and artist, and pavement dreamer, whose society attracted Dr. Johnson and Goldsmith and Reynolds and Boswell to the "*Cock*" and the "*Rainbow*" in the eighteenth century. What a chance this was to explain the intellectual hub of London to the

Countess. She listened with the deepest and most sympathetic interest. I told her of the famous "F.C." port, so named after that illustrious English novelist, the only English author whose most popular heroine had been impersonated on the stage in Paris by the great Sarah Bernhardt herself. I described to her the "wit-combats" which took place at —— daily, which deserved to rank with the famous encounters between Ben Jonson and Shakespeare at the "Mermaid." The Countess had heard of Shakespeare. There were among its "habitués" business men and lawyers and writers and artists, who scintillated for hours on end, throwing out such a brilliant blaze that they sometimes had to be put out for fear of setting the neighbouring Thames on fire, and thus attracting Zeppelins. And there was a manager named Albert, a genial and sprightly conversationalist, and the inventor of a champion cocktail, who was quite one of the most popular personages in the City.

"Ah," said the Countess, "in England you do know how to recognise and reward genius. So different from us in France, where we treat our inventors with neglect. But I must say that that street—Fleet Street, you call it?—is very pretty, with all those charming little flower gardens in front." "Gardens, you are dreaming! Fleet Street is in the heart of the great City of London. Where are the gardens?" "Why, those white, flowery, feathery things all along the front of the houses; don't you see them?" Gracious! What the Countess had mistaken for a succession of small flower gardens were the Lord Mayor's gorgeous state carriage, the Lord Mayor's lackeys, with their

plumes and bouquets and blatherumskite, and the great Lord Mayor himself !

*Jan. 28th.*—A letter from J. de B——, who writes in reply to my letter of the 11th: “ On the 11th of January I was, exactly as you dreamt, in a grange, and I also had a very black face, for we were resting for five days after being relieved at the trenches ; now we are again in the first line.”

### CHAPTER III

*French lack of ammunition : Postal deficiencies : Three British officers from St. Mary's Home : Characteristics of the German soldier : British too gentlemanly : German hog's flesh : The Desclaux scandal : "Kultur" : Nets for submarines : American foibles : Treatment of American tourists in Germany : The French soldier's pay : Effect of the Dreyfus case : Chamberlain's epigram : M. Poincaré : Reminder to Quixotic Englishmen*

*Jan. 29th.*—De B—— has learned that the reason why the French advance was not pushed after the Battle of the Marne was that General Joffre discovered a terrible deficiency in the French ammunition reserves. He proposes not to make any further advance until in addition to the stocks required to meet the daily expenditure there are 6,000,000 shells in reserve. These figures are now nearly reached. France was beginning to get her heavy artillery ready, and her necessary reserve stock of ammunition, and Russia was about to construct her strategic railways, when Germany saw that the psychological moment had arrived for precipitating the war.

The poor Countess is furious, as well she may be, on account of the fate that has befallen the parcel she sent to her son when he started for the front.

To-day it came back through the post in a very dilapidated state, with a portion of its contents stolen. I have written a letter for her to the Colonel of her son's regiment to ask for an inquiry to be made, and another to the Director of the "Colis Isolés" Depot at Marseilles, who seems to be mainly responsible. All her letters to her son, and a telegram she sent to him the day before he started for the front, have either been sent back or gone astray.

I went to tea this afternoon at G——'s to meet three British officers who are stopping here on a convalescence furlough at the St. Mary's Home. They were all captains, and apparently all aviators, for the time being at any rate. One of them, a Captain D——, confirmed the story told me by the French soldier at Tarascon, that the German is not a soldier to be trusted unless advancing in masses, or pushed on by the "gradé" or non-com. He does not easily withstand a bayonet attack, although he will go through heavy fire. He related the retreat of the Prussian Guard on one occasion, which he witnessed, and the extraordinary incident that followed it. A detachment of this Guard advanced towards the British lines, unarmed and doing the goosetep, and were shot down to the last man. This, of course, was the punishment inflicted on them by the German Staff for their previous retreat. "I cannot understand," said Captain D——, "how they could get the men to do it." De B—— afterwards expressed the opinion that British officers were too highly civilised, too genial and beautifully mannered to chastise the Germans as they deserve.

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*Jan. 30th to Feb. 1st.*—The weather is fine but cold. There seems to be a deadlock everywhere. The situation is such that in one's moments of deepest depression one has a fear that there is at least a possibility that Germany may in a sense win, that is, fight the Allies to a standstill, and then make terms fairly favourable to herself, the reason being that she is living flesh, hog's flesh if you will, hog's flesh no doubt, but still, even at that, living, healthy, homogeneous, organic flesh, while both in France and England there is so much that cannot be considered otherwise than as decayed, putrid, dead-man's flesh, galvanised for the moment into a semblance of life, but sure sooner or later, and probably before the war is over, to begin stinking again.

Could anything be more depressing than this Desclaux scandal? The sordidness of it all, and the conviction that it leaves one with that, in spite of all the heroism and self-sacrifice of the thousands who are giving their lives for their country, there is still some mysterious "power behind the throne," which is stultifying their efforts and befooling their noblest aspirations. Desclaux is the horrible Quilp-like personification of corruption and rascality in the centre of a gang of international, naturalised and mostly "Boche" Jews, who are at one and the same time his tempters, his masters, and his dupes. And such is the domination of the Jews over a large section of the Press in Paris that even the *Figaro*, which has been the most active denunciator of Desclaux and his accomplices, for the very good reason that Desclaux was the protégé and chief secretary of ex-Minister Caillaux, whose wife mur-



dered the *Figaro's* editor, even the *Figaro* in its articles on the scandal signed by another Israelite, M. Latzarus, cannot bring itself to describe Desclaux' accomplices as Jews, which they all are, but writes them down as "Teutons," ascribing to them all the coarse and unscrupulous instincts of the typical German. Since when did Teutonia immigrate from Palestine?

To set against the Desclaux scandal there is the fatal shooting in England of two young officers by a couple of foolish and impudent Tommies, with the crowd taking the private soldiers' part as a class issue, and actually causing the gun to go off. We have had plenty of Desclaux scandals in England, but this attitude of the private soldier and the public towards the officer reveals a state of mind which has been entirely foreign to France since the early days of the French Revolution. And one is saddened by the reflection that in Germany neither of these scandals would have been possible without the severest repression following. Also the conclusion is that England and France, both Jew-ridden and politician-ridden, are not capable of the same sustained homogeneous national effort as Germany. The German "Kultur" is diabolic because it is wickedly directed. But humanely and Christianly inspired it would deserve imitation, for it is based upon a highly efficient and logical method, which has won the suffrages of an entire people. Its greatest achievement has been the patriotic education of the Germans. Look at the sustained and loyal support of Germany by the German-Americans. It is disgusting to most of us, because it is a demonstration in favour of the Wrong against the Right,

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but, apart from that, it is admirable as compared with the attitude for so many generations past of the Americans of English descent, whose chief aim and delight has been to bully, bother, blackmail and insult the "Old Country." Even now the German-Americans in the United States are doing far more for their "old country" than the Wilsons and Bryans and Hearsts are doing for Great Britain. Russia, from the point of view of national "Kultur," is to most of us Europeans, at least, an unknown quantity for the time being. But so far she does not seem to have had any Colonel Desclauxes or Private Harrises, during the present campaign at any rate. And if she has had them, it is pretty certain that she has known how to deal with them.

General X——, who is a famous engineer, gave it as his opinion this afternoon that some means ought to be found without too much difficulty for automatically exploding submarine mines, before they can do any harm, perhaps by using the sea as a conductor. By the same principle it should be possible to govern the approach of ships. He thinks that nets of some kind could be used for catching submarines in, like huge fish. Calculating the duration of the war from the practical American millionaire's point of view, he holds that a billion francs would buy up all the wealth in Europe. At present the war is costing about 5 milliards of francs per month, and at this rate it cannot last more than three years, which is also the limit fixed by the British War Office for the duration of the voluntary enlistments. He expresses great contempt for President Wilson, who appears to him to have the mentality of a Western Sunday-school teacher.

It certainly is strange how haunted the American public man often is to the end of his days by the Sunday-school impressions of his youth. I remember being struck by this at a banquet which was given some years ago in Paris by the American Chamber of Commerce. Among the guests of honour invited to make speeches were General Porter, the then United States Ambassador, and M. Ribot, who at the time was either President of the Council or Minister for Foreign Affairs. M. Ribot is the most academic parliamentary orator of our times. He delivered an address in every way worthy of his own reputation and of the best traditions of the French Chamber. When he had done, General Porter stood up to fire off a string of humorous anecdotes in guise of a speech, the first one beginning with, "When I was at Sunday-school . . ." Some people who have not fathomed the American character think it snobbish of Americans who have no orders or titles in their own country to attach so much importance, as they undoubtedly do, to securing European orders, and even titles. But the Americans frankly look upon them as certificates of moral merit, and honour their recipients as if they had won prizes for good conduct at the Sunday-school.

I found the N——s sociably gathered at the Café R—— this afternoon. Madame N—— is alarmed for Paulette, her interesting little soubrette, who is very dangerously ill with typhoid.

*Feb. 4th to Feb. 6th.*—General X——'s adventures in escaping from "Boche" territory prove what seems to be little known in England, that the

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Germans treated the unhyphenated Americans with almost as little ceremony as if they were foes.

In Munich, X——, having mounted an interminable flight of stairs in the central police station to the office where safe-conducts were issued to Americans, found to his amazement that a German-American he had known in Philadelphia was in charge of it, with full control of the official seals. This man recognised General X——, and said he was "doing his bit" for the land of his birth!

The situation at the front appears to be dormant. According to an English officer-interpreter, who lunched with us to-day, it is a "stalemate." His mood was not enthusiastic nor even hopeful. He was depressed at receiving from his wife at home this constant appeal: "Do try and keep out of danger, dear." "When," he exclaimed impatiently, "will the English people begin to get it into their heads that this is not a tea-fight?" He said that thousands of men were falling out of the ranks of the British force from sickness; he said "daily," but this must be a mild exaggeration; also that the British War Office is gradually substituting French for British interpreters as the latter were too expensive. If this be a fact it will produce a disagreeable impression on the French soldiers. Miserably paid as these are—a little less than a halfpenny a day—they are, as is only human, a little envious, though quite good-naturedly, not bitterly, of the very superior pay enjoyed by the British soldier; so I am sure they would resent the idea that the British War Office was taking advantage of this inferior treatment to save money, off their backs as it were. B—— further declared with some disgust

that rank was being given away in Kitchener's Army very casually, and that he had actually seen one man in the City of London serving his customers in a Kodak establishment of which he was manager and wearing a major's uniform.

*Feb. 7th.*—The ups and downs of the war, the revelations which the war has provoked of the military unpreparedness of France, the incompetency of certain of her generals, who owed their situations to the vicious influence of politics on the army, has naturally aroused echoes of the Dreyfus case, to the subsidiary developments of which so many of the evils now complained of are traceable. The Dreyfus case is now, thank goodness, almost forgotten, and the new generation, the young Frenchmen of twenty years and thereabouts, have never heard of it, and it may be hoped for their sakes that they never may. If they should, it may probably seem incredible to them that for upwards of three years the entire world was turned inside out because half of it persisted in holding that a condemned man should be held guiltless, without further proof, because he belonged to a race which is supposed to have been the victim of religious persecution in the Middle Ages, while the other half maintained that it would have been far wiser to have shot him from the very first on suspicion, without any trial at all, because he was a Jew. All this is old and inexpressibly dull history, in fact no better verdict on the whole Dreyfus "affaire" was ever pronounced than that formulated in French by the epigrammatic tongue of the late Joseph Chamberlain (he was talking to a Frenchman who had

played a prominent rôle in the case): "Il me semble qu'il y a deux espèces d'imbéciles en France, les Dreyfusards et les anti-Dreyfusards." But in its bearings on the present war, the future historian will be obliged, if he wishes to be truthful and impartial, to explain the Dreyfus case, and to relate its influence in forming the public life of France as it was when the war broke out. The word "intellectuel" was a product of the Dreyfus case, and after being a title which both in France and England was assumed with pride and conferred as a compliment, became opprobrious in a very brief space of time after the commencement of the war. It was the pedantic egoism, crass ignorance, or simple bad faith of the so-called "intellectuels" in both countries which had been Germany's trump card, and helped to bring her, at the outset, so near to victory. This statement will no doubt anger a good many whose intellectual shops have now been perforce shut up, but it is nevertheless true, and it is a fact which the historian must and will ultimately register, for while the legend very often triumphs for a generation or two, truth "wins through" in the long run. In addition to a certain number of catchwords that have gone by the board since the war began, there are not a few politicians who made their name and fame in the Dreyfus case, whose influence will not survive it. Prominent among these is M. Clemenceau, who owes to the "affaire" his parliamentary rehabilitation. He also owed to it his premiership, and France owes to him that when he was President of the Ministerial Council, he appointed to be Minister of War the ludicrously incompetent Picquart, as a reward for having

championed Captain Dreyfus, but with the result for France that her arsenals during his ministry were denuded of ammunition. Picquart, who had been promoted a full General, did for the French army what Pelletan, whose methods so closely resembled in many ways those of Churchill, did for the French navy. He cut its nails and drew its teeth, in fact he arranged its "toilette" before delivering it up to the German executioner, much as M. Deibler does for the condemned criminal who is to be guillotined. Then there was Jaurès, also one of the champions of "Dreyfusism," a notable "intellectuel," and therefore an internationalist and a champion of Germany, but he is now dead and his influence has not survived him. The "intellectuals," as was once pointed out to me by the late Alphonse Bertillon, who of all men in the world was the most competent to take their measure, whether in the figurative or the positive sense of the phrase, were composed of "dupers and dupes." In which category the late M. Jaurès must definitely be placed I do not propose to examine here. There is no harm in believing that up to a certain point he belonged to both. Other names could be mentioned, but of course the end of the war must be awaited before it will be possible to judge the full extent of the changes that it has wrought upon the old political institutions in France, and the men who stood for them. One point will have to be borne in mind, that in the interval between the close of the Dreyfus case and the outbreak of the war, Jewish influence in France was very greatly increased, became almost paramount in fact. This in a great measure accounted for the disorganisation of the

army, the inefficiency of the General Staff, and the general unrest caused by the persecution directed against the Church. As to this anti-clerical campaign, without going into the question of the rights and wrongs on either side, there is no doubt that the large minority of French people, who still clung to the Christian religion, were deeply discontented with the persecution its ministers were subjected to, and the sordid scandals by which this persecution was accompanied, and followed. Just before the war, however, the extreme Radical, anti-clerical, internationalist party was beginning to lose its influence. The first sign of this was the election of M. Poincaré to the Presidency, and to this lucky circumstance France, in a considerable measure, owes her salvation to-day, for though M. Poincaré has many defects, the chief of which is that he is a lawyer, and the least that he is too long-winded, his high-minded patriotism, his energy, and his moral courage are indisputable. The whole of the "affaire" now appears as an elaborate plot "got up" by Germany to disorganise the French army, discredit the French Government, and divide the French people. If one said this before the war, one was laughed at. There were huge numbers of persons in England who, simply constructed, like the jellyfish, which has only a stomach, seemed to possess no motive or emotive power of expression outside of a horse-laugh. If you hinted that there was such a thing as German espionage, they roared with laughter; if you suggested that the German Emperor was not the best friend England ever had, they roared with laughter; if you propounded the fantastic theory that the Jews were not the most



appropriate race in the world to control English finance, to be created hereditary legislators in England, to preside English law courts, to be at the head of the British Navy, they roared and roared again with laughter—in fact it was this far-fetched contention which tickled them more than any other. They formed an important community, which for the sake of brief definition might be referred to as the Horse-Collar Club. Some of them, though I do not think enough of them, are now laughing on the wrong side of their faces. But in any case there is a likelihood that they will always laugh with the same imbecile persistence and loudness as before, the simple reason being that they can do nothing else. Let them laugh; but I would nevertheless remind persons whose sense of the ridiculous is not quite so overwhelming, that the Dreyfus case began by the handing over to the Intelligence Department of the French War Office fragments of correspondence found by a “*femme de ménage*,” a charwoman, named Bastian, in the waste-paper basket of the German Military Attaché in Paris. Among these documents were discovered the torn fragments of the famous “*bordereau*,” on the strength of which Dreyfus was condemned. Now it is perfectly obvious to those who were acquainted with German methods then, and perhaps it may have become obvious to a select few who have been able to judge of German methods since, that if those fragments were put into the waste-paper basket by the German Military Attaché, it was not through negligence, but with intention. The members of the Horse-Collar Club laughed themselves sick over this explanation at the time, which has never indeed

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found much acceptance. Perhaps it may now. Anyhow, the Dreyfus case, which did immense harm to France, and indirectly to England, was proportionately useful to Germany.

Reminder, and warning to our dear Quixotic Englishmen and Englishwomen, suggested by the above: While you are taking the Jew's part, he is taking your portion.

## CHAPTER IV

*Difference between "Kultur" and "Culture" : Superiority of the former : Dr. Peters : Nice bars put out of bounds : Joffre's belief : Strange remark by an Englishwoman : Manœuvres of British politicians : "Not enough blood" : A letter from Kitchener's Army : Shaking French confidence : General Mouravieff's lecture : Death of the soubrette : Prohibition of absinthe : Outraged mothers : Desclaux again : Thomas Trotter : The Kaiser to be held responsible*

Feb. 8th.—Discussing with General X—— what the Germans really mean by "Kultur," he agreed that they undoubtedly indicate by that word the systematic, scientific, and intensive cultivation of a nation's forces. The German Emperor has astounded a great many people, and roused the uproarious laughter of the Horse-Collar Club, by plainly stating that German "Kultur" is not identical with civilisation. Criminal and villain as he is, it may nevertheless be accorded to him that in this matter he is speaking from book. The fact is that the German expression "Kultur" is completely misunderstood both in England and France. It is not equivalent to "culture" in the language of either of these countries. Its meaning corresponds with that of "culture" in such words as agriculture, puericulture, pisciculture, and designates

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the cultivation of nationality with the same kind of ruthless and æsthetic egoism which Maurice Barrès, imitating at a distance one of the paradoxical poses of the late Oscar Wilde, introduced into his "culte du moi."

In Germany, this national "culte du moi" takes the form of Pan-Germanism, in Russia of Pan-Slavism, and in the United States of America of Pan-Dollarism. In England, the majority of folk seem to be going about with a football in their heads instead of a brain. When Germans say that their "Kultur" is superior to that of France and England they mean what they say, and, within the limits of what they mean, they are right. They have certainly carried to a higher degree towards perfection than have those other nations the cultivation of national ideals on a basis of prosperity and unity. Both in England and France, national "Kultur," in this sense, was at a low ebb when the war broke out. Our Government, working exclusively in the interests of a class, was promoting poverty, disunion, and civil war. It was impoverishing the rich at the expense of the poor. It had, with a corresponding loss of all sense of honour, lost all sense of nationality. One "scrap of paper," which it attempted to put into circulation with a forged endorsement, resulted in the resignation, on grounds of personal honour, of the heads of the army, upon whom the country is now depending for its salvation. That these generals consented to take up their duties again is creditable to their patriotism and fortunate for us, but it was a narrow shave. The situation in France was infinitely better than in England, but it was nevertheless bad. Jewish

influence was dominant there as in England, and one can be certain of this, that though Germany may not beat the French or the English, singly or combined, she will beat the Jews any time, and a country that allows itself to be misgoverned and misled by Jews, or by statesmen who do the bidding of Jews, is foredoomed if it comes into clash with militant Germany. German "Kultur" makes it impossible for the Jew to have any guiding influence in the German organisation, except as a modest, zealous, and faithful worker for the exclusive greatness of Germany. In France, as a wealthy American with influential political friends here was remarking yesterday, no one can hope to rise to high State office unless he is a Freemason, and the dominant force in French freemasonry is that of the Jews, who, having a racial freemasonry of their own, are thus doubly powerful. The principle of "Kultur" vetoes any such situation in Germany, just as it would have vetoed the mischievous activities of a Haldane. No statesman could profess for another country the attachment that the Lord Chancellor has declared for Germany and live, at any rate, as an active statesman, in the land of "Kultur."

"Kultur" has nothing to do with broad humanity or mere educational refinement. "We in France," said J. H—— to me the other day, "make the mistake of confusing culture with the Beaux-Arts." This is very true. In England, all that you have to do to prove your "culture" is to profess admiration for the painting of Whistler, the music of Wagner, and the art-criticism of Mr. Maccoll—you must be careful not to admire anything English. But German "Kultur" is the science and art of

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breeding, "élevage," to use the French expression, and is adaptable to the creation of a superior kind of potato, or a fatter and more prolific pig. Applied to the German nation, it has undoubtedly produced a fatter, more prolific, and therefore superior kind of human pig, which is the average "Boche" of to-day. It may also successfully turn out a superior kind of scoundrel, a super-traitor and ruffian like Dr. Peters. In the kitchen garden, the production of the superior type of vegetable may, in accordance with the scientific laws of "Kultur," require the destruction of all the plant-life in its vicinity. Applying this law to the "Kultur" of the German nation, the Germans feel perfectly justified in devastating and depopulating Belgium and the North of France. "Kultur" makes the German a protectionist because he seeks to cultivate trade scientifically to the collective and individual prosperity and well-being of the German nation. That is why he quite sincerely (paradoxical as it seems to us) preaches to the inhabitants of invaded Northern France that, organised on the lines of scientific German "Kultur," and assisted by it, they will be better off than by remaining French, and he obtains a wider hearing than many people imagine. That is why he tries to suppress nationalities and languages other than German in annexed countries, honestly believing that it is in the truer interest of the peoples of such countries that he should do so. "Kultur" has created in Germany not only a nearly perfect military machine, but an administrative governing machine which is worthy of being compared with it. It has eliminated nearly all the elements of "pull" and corruption and jobbery and

habitual negligence, which are the curse of other European countries, and tend to discontent and disunion, and welded all Germany into a homogeneous, contented, even self-pleased, and enthusiastically united whole. There was much of this "Kultur" inspiration in the theories of the French Revolution, but it was Napoleon who, borrowing it from Cæsarism, laid the basis of it in Europe, and it is from him that the Germans have imitated it. The word "Kultur" might, in order to avoid the confusion with our own word "culture," be translated into English as "plebiculture."

*Feb. 9th.*—For some time past the streets of Nice have derived an additional note of picturesqueness from the presence of numerous British khaki uniforms. For the wearers of these, G—— reports that all bars have been put out of bounds. The natural tendency to conviviality, which is excited by being on a holiday in a sunny land, with hospitable people all around, is, it appears, counteracting to a dangerous extent the healing influences of St. Mary's Convalescent Home at Cimiez. So the regulation is probably a wise one. The weather, unfortunately, has not been favourable to our sick officers who are here, and I know of one case of a man who arrived from the trenches with a bad cold on the chest, and has gone back with pleurisy. Red Cross motor-cars filled with English officers speed daily through the streets of Nice at a pace which appals even the Niçois, hardened as he is to the desperate driving of the cosmopolitan visitor and his own cabmen, and it is pleasant to notice that some of them still bear the letter "D," which shows

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that they have been captured from Deutschland. We have been told by one British Staff officer here that the British at the front now number 750,000, and that when the time comes the Germans will be driven back with the bayonet !

*Feb. 10th.*—A distinguished Senator, who has just seen Joffre, said to-day that Joffre believes he can expel the Germans from France and Belgium whenever he likes, but it would cost him, if he did it now, at least 100,000 men. The same Senator said that Italy is absolutely sure to join in with the Allies, and that very soon.

In connection with German "Kultur" and the failure of the British mind, as a rule, to understand in the least what it means, or to assimilate any of its doctrines, even those which are good and reasonable, I noted to-day a quotation from a German prisoner's letter published in to-day's *E—N—*, giving the response of a British hospital nurse in explanation of the fact (which had naturally astonished Mr. German) that it was for the German patients that the best rooms were reserved. "Oh," said the dear, intelligent young lady, "we know that the German soldier in Germany has quite a different standing from the British soldier in England." Wasn't that brave and nice and sweet of her? A prolonged "Kultur" treatment well rubbed in is what the poor, heartless fool needed. Her answer is comparable with a remark which was made to an Englishwoman I know by another Englishwoman who was working with her at the American Embassy in Paris on the preparation of the lists of British prisoners in Germany. "Of course," she said



brightly, "you and I must now look upon ourselves as neutrals." The suggestion was, I am glad to say, treated with indignant scorn by her companion. The merest glimmer of "Kultur" would have prevented any German woman from saying such a thing. "Kultur," in fact, the moment that its aim is to raise a nation collectively and individually to its highest possible social and moral level, cannot be all wrong. It is only the German method which is wrong. The mistake is to be detected in the difference between the French "Vive la France!" and the German "Deutschland über alles!" The former is a legitimate, honourable, and beautiful aspiration, expressing the right ideal of "Kultur" of the noblest form, the latter is an affront to other peoples, and an outrage upon Humanity. Many of the bombastic catch-phrases adopted by the upholders of so-called British Imperialism, and either borrowed from or enshrined in the sickly trash of Kipling's imitators, might have been made in Germany by the professors of the worst type of "Kultur." On the other hand, "Kultur" of the right kind, logically understood and sincerely practised, would rid both England and France of a good many national abuses and elements of weakness. "Kultur" would get rid of Monte Carlo, for instance, and of the London night clubs.

*Feb. 11th.*—As far as can be gathered from the meagre news to hand the Germans on the Western front seem to be advancing. Joffre is waiting, no doubt, for the arrival of the big British Army, meaning to use it, so it is thought here, as a battering-ram. It looks as if politicians, both in England

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and France, were manœuvring to spare the men who are voters, and upon whose votes their political existence depends, while this is not a consideration in either Germany or Russia. There is a rather silly expression current here against which I have more than once protested with some emphasis, but it is a straw which shows how the wind is blowing. It is that "the British have not lost enough blood." Neither the French nor the British can lose too little, but it will be a tragic mistake for either side to try to use its ally as a cat's-paw for pulling the chestnuts out of the fire. Politics, politics, politics ! There is too much of them on both sides of the Channel.

I have received a letter to-day from S——, who is with Kitchener's Army in England. He says that they are about as near getting to the front as they were five months ago.

*Feb. 12th.*—The *Eclaireur* placards a telegram from London quoting a question put in the House of Commons as to whether there is any possibility of beginning peace negotiations with Germany. The "sauteur" or "bounder" in England who seeks notoriety at his country's expense by asking this sort of question may not know how keen is the French moral "flair," or smelling power. The French do not at all admire or condone what the bounder in question perhaps hopes they will at the worst treat as Quixotic. The French may not say so in just so many words at this moment, but they look upon "bunkum" of this description as peculiarly typical of British "hypocrisy," which is precisely what it is, with perhaps even a more villainous

element included. I have often been asked by Englishmen why the French, in the old days, were so fond of accusing us of hypocrisy, an accusation which the Germans, by the way, in their natural spirit of imitation, have since adopted as their own. Well, this is an instance which explains why they did so. The man who wants to cut a fine figure on the cheap, or at somebody else's expense, is in their view a contemptible kind of hypocrite and humbug. Unfortunately this type is, and always has been, very common in England, especially among her public men, from orators in Hyde Park upwards. The French are an exceedingly observant, ironically minded people, which makes them the greatest masters of caricature in the world, and they exercise much cynical incredulity, as a rule, in their analysis of motives. The Englishman, in his Chadband attitude as a humanitarian with universal sympathies and indulgence, wedded to an utter disregard of his neighbour's interests or safety, makes the Frenchman laugh, on account of the coarse and grotesque clumsiness with which this philanthropic pose is assumed, and also to sneer, because he is convinced that the Englishman is not doing it for nothing. This telegram from London tends to shake the confidence of its French readers in the sincerity (to put it mildly) of certain public men in London, and reawaken old traditions of distrust, if not with Albion, with Albion's spokesmen, which the Entente Cordiale and the early incidents of the war seemed to have eradicated.

De B—— and I went this afternoon to the Cercle Russe, to listen to a lecture on the war by General Count Mouravieff-Amoursky, until recently attached

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to the Russian General Staff. He gave a very interesting account of the geographical conditions of the Russian front, and laid great stress upon the fact that it was due to the very strong German party which had so long exercised its baneful influence in Russia that when the war broke out, though Germany was prepared, Russia was not.

Madame N—— related to me the death from typhoid fever of her poor little soubrette, Paulette, who died in her arms. Two large tears rolled down the poor girl's cheeks as she breathed her last. She was so young, and life had been a very bright thing to her. By contrast, the purely normal, natural, *civil* death, in such an instance as this, seems additionally pathetic in the midst of horrors so inconceivable as to render us almost callous to them.

*Feb. 13th.*—To-day the French Chamber voted the abolition of the sale of absinthe under severe penalties, as a definite and final measure applicable to the whole of France. The General Commanding the Armed Camp of Nice issued this veto first of all in Nice a couple of days after the outbreak of the war; the Prefect extended it to the whole of the Alpes-Maritimes and Monte Carlo; thence it was spread by the Government all over France; ultimately Russia imitated it on an even bigger scale, for she included all alcoholic drink in the same prohibition. If Nice never became famous for anything else, she would be rendered immortal by the fact that it was in this town that the greatest social and moral reform of modern times, in Europe at any rate, was given birth to, affecting millions of people and millions of capital.

*Feb. 14th.*—It is said here that the 145th Regiment of Territorials, mostly fathers of families, from forty-five years of age and upwards, have been badly cut up in the Argonne, the whole 1st battalion having been annihilated. This may be an exaggeration, but the Countess recalls their departure to the front from our neighbourhood on the 4th, and they appeared to her then to be very downcast.

The question agitating all France at the present moment is what shall be the fate of the children born as the result of the French mothers having been outraged by German soldiers. For the present, at any rate, the law has decided that these unfortunate women must not count on the assistance or the approval of the State in procuring an artificial release from their condition. It is characteristic of the strange effect that the war is having on the moral state of many persons' minds that de B—— expressed indignation to-day that this decision should have been come to.

*Feb. 15th.*—The *Figaro* complains that on the same day that it was decided to try Desclaux, according to the civil instead of the military code, whereby his punishment, if he were found guilty, would be less severe, three reservists were condemned by a court-martial to a year's imprisonment each for stealing twenty pounds of coffee. The paper points out indignantly that for this one offence these ignorant simple soldiers are punished with all the rigour of the military law, while Desclaux, who had been stealing everything he could lay his hands on for a long period of months, is given the

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benefit of a civil trial although in active service as a colonel.

In the same paper there appears the account of the condemnation at Chantilly of an English stableman, Thomas Trotter, who on the way to seek enlistment in the British Army seems to have indulged in excessive jollification, with the result that he imagined he saw a party of Uhlans in the Chantilly forest, just as did Madame Cocot in September last—though without the excuse of jollification—in the forest of Sénart. The court-martial condemned the English stable-lad to ten days' imprisonment, which seems a little severe. I fancy that in similar circumstances a French lad in England would have been let off with a caution.

*Feb. 16th.*—I asked G. N—— to-day to explain from his own French point of view the Desclaux affair. He said it was a "pure infamie," but that the more the Government heaped these things up the better for the country, whose eyes would be so sooner opened. A description quoted from the English papers of Donington Hall and the luxurious treatment by our Government of the German prisoners took his breath away, but he said that just the same outrage upon public opinion and public decency had been perpetrated at Draguignan, though, from what I hear, it is not by any means on the same scale as in England. He could hardly believe that to a question in the House of Commons the Under-Secretary of State for War in England had coolly replied that, indeed, from all reports, from the reliable statement of an escaped British officer, it was to be feared that the British prisoners

in Germany were being worse treated than the other prisoners. "Et voilà !" Our Government is too stupid to have discovered that German psychology is such that by simply informing the German Emperor that the British Government would hold him personally responsible if these outrages continue, they would almost certainly have ceased.

## CHAPTER V

*French Socialists insult Russia : The Liberal mentality in war time : A butcher's heroism : What makes courage : Hanging for German murderers : Treatment of the refugees : Another Tannenberg : The future King of France and Belgium : The French will exercise reprisals : Letters from the front : The rights of violated mothers : Can Germany be wholly crushed ? : A French opinion on the British Army : What a British officer thought of the French : The price of bread : 60,000 French and Belgian women ill-used by German swine : The cost of the war*

Feb. 17th.—The sensation of the day is the report of the proceedings of the Socialist Congress, at which apparently Guesde and Sembat, two French Ministers, joined in insults addressed to Russia. History shows that whenever a nation is going through a life and death crisis, it is the Conservatives who are loyal to the national cause, and drop their opposition if a Liberal government be in power, in order not to hamper the national defence, while the Liberals, on the contrary, invariably place party above national interests. This is what caused the terrible tragedy to France of the last Franco-German War in 1870, and it happened again in the Boer War. Quite apart from any question of the superiority of one party policy over the other, it is



a psychological phenomenon which is worth noting, and it is in character that its explanation must be sought. The mentality that tends towards Liberalism is only superficially patriotic. It is because German Socialism is not Liberal, but autocratic and hierarchical, that it has thrown itself heart and soul into the present war. Liebnicht, its only Liberal member, finds himself completely deserted by the rest of the party. Guesde, the Collectivist Pope, the high-priest of the doctrine of a universal international trust of capital and labour, which is all that Collectivist Socialism really means, though now a member of the French Cabinet, is much more hostile to France than is the other Pope, the Pope of Rome, the high-priest of the doctrine of an international political domination which is based on the universality of a creed.

The report that the Russian army is threatened with the envelopment of both its right and left wings causes some perturbation, but the Russians have already got themselves out of an equally dangerous scrape.

A wounded French sergeant here said that when with a party of his men he found himself lost and without food he met a commissariat officer and asked for some bread. The officer refused it when he learned that the sergeant belonged to the famous 15th Corps, which was accused of cowardice by Senator Gervais at the beginning of the war. However, the sergeant got what he needed from another officer later on. This shows how difficult it is to kill a calumny. There is now very little doubt that the reports of the misconduct of the 15th Corps, mainly recruited from the Riviera, were exaggerated.

Since the incident occurred, the 15th Corps has earned more "mentions in dispatches"—"citations à l'ordre de l'armée"—than any other.

*Feb. 18th.*—Our American Delegate said to-day that he failed to see what the United States could do against Germany even if war should result from the sinking of an American ship. They can attack her neither by land nor by sea. German property in America, however, is very considerable, and that could be seized.

It looks as if the threats of Germany were part of a scheme to try to embroil Great Britain with the United States, and that probably the Germans are not so short of food as they pretend to be. No doubt if an American ship were sunk the Americans would be asked to believe that this was partly the fault of the English for having used the American flag, and for seeking by means of a blockade to starve Germany's civil population. As reprisals by the Americans against Germany would be impossible or very difficult, they might thus be induced—this is evidently what the German Government is aiming at—to vent their ill-humour on the English.

The butcher, whose shop is on our ground floor, has been made a corporal. In one desperate encounter he took command of his detachment, which had lost all its officers, and ordered a bayonet charge. His head was turned towards his men as he shouted to them to advance, and when he turned round to face the enemy he found that he had, without knowing it, transfixed a "Boche" with his bayonet. His surprise at finding the body of the "Boche" hanging on the bayonet was very great,

and he says in a letter to his wife that he will never forget the horrible grin on the dead man's face. This is the only enemy so far that the butcher has killed. He adds that men who hesitate to charge when ordered to are shot down from behind by the non-commissioned officers. He had noticed this, that in a charge a certain number of the older men, in the territorial regiments particularly, who are short of wind, are apt to fall headlong when half-way, and lie there to be shot at, being unable to get up owing to the weight of the knapsack.

The reason of this may be that the will which works in the brain propels the soldier's head forward faster than his legs can follow it, these being more under the control of instinct, thus causing him to fall head foremost. The baptism of fire reveals in most people the presence of two forcible individualities in the same body, a Don Quixote, who is full of courage and "go," and a Sancho Panza, instinct with prudence and reserve. The latter lives in the legs, and, as a rule, proposes to direct their movements. It is when the will has got accustomed to dominate the instinct and control the imagination (and the legs) that the soldier is seasoned against fear. These allowances made, with very few exceptions all men are much of a muchness as far as courage is concerned.

*Feb. 19th.*—At last some one has had the courage to suggest reprisals against the German pirates and murderers of women and children. The Frenchman who writes a political leader, or rather a squib, every day in the *New York Herald*, asks that Lieutenant von Hindelen, who dropped bombs

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with fatal effect over Paris in the autumn, and is now a prisoner with the French, should be tried for murder before the Assize Court ; also that the crew of the submarines who blew up passenger ships without warning should be hanged. Such is the " veulerie " or flabbiness of a great number of people both here and in England with respect to the war and the atrocities committed by the Germans that this suggestion is likely to be looked on widely as a joke. Yet it is a step in the right direction. Reprisals would probably be useless ; but it should be made perfectly plain to the German Government that when the time comes for settling up the final accounts, the murderers, or those who have caused murders, will be dealt with in accordance with the law of the countries where these crimes have been committed.

*Feb. 23rd.*—Another pouring day. The chief subjects of discussion are the Russian retreat from East Prussia and the attitude of the United States towards the German threats. On the whole the state of affairs is somewhat disquieting.

One of the acute problems caused by the war is that of the refugees. The general impression that they have made all over France is that they are not disposed to do much to help themselves. Allowances, of course, must be, and are, made for the abnormal state of mind which their misfortunes have cast them into. But in some parishes there is a tendency to treat them harshly as vagabonds, and against this treatment influential people are now protesting. The law as it at present stands accords pecuniary help only to those refugees

who are literally without any other means of subsistence. Even if the wretched refugee is so situated that he is unable to derive any advantage from the resources which were his previous to the war, he has no legal claim to an "allocation," or subsidy, and the maximum of that is one shilling per day. It may equally be refused to those who decline to work, or to those who have work to do. In one commune the mayor distributes no money, even to the poorest refugees, except as an advance on wages for future work. A suggestion has been put forward that all the refugees who are in receipt of public charity should be obliged to furnish themselves with a card upon which would be marked the sums that they had received, in addition to which they would not be allowed to quit one district for another without the consent of the local authorities, and would be constantly under the supervision of the police. Such measures as these, however, are generally recognised as being far too rigorous, and a wide appeal to public and organised charity is to be made on behalf of the refugees.

*Feb. 24th.*—The Russians seem to have suffered another Tannenberg. They admit having lost practically the whole of one army corps. The weather remains cold and showery. A letter came to-day from S——, who is with Kitchener's Army, together with his photograph in uniform, in which he certainly looks very smart. The Army is apparently getting ready for a move.

General X——, who has officially represented the United States in Belgium, to-day gave me a curious description of the King of the Belgians and his

mother, the Duchess of Flanders, who is of pure German race. He says that the King's secret ambition is to become King of France and Belgium when the war is over, and that the French Royalists favour this idea. "He reeks," said X——, "with Orleanism, but neither in dignity of appearance nor intelligence is he a patch on the late King."

The French are beginning to talk sensibly and seriously of the reprisals which should follow the war, and they are adopting the idea that the persons really responsible, however highly placed, and not the mere perpetrators of the atrocities, should be held to stern account. M. Jules Delafosse, the Deputy, has written an energetic article in this sense, and the idea seems to be making way.

Letters this evening from L—— and J. de B——. L—— bids me rather pathetically "adieu," but says: "Je suis content de partir pour défendre la bonne cause!" He leaves for the front on the 2nd of March. J. de B—— is in an infirmary, with a wound in the finger of the left hand, received on the 1st of February. "We attacked," he writes, "with success, and after all I am glad to have come off so well, for many of my comrades fell beside me." He expects to return on leave for a short time to see his mother.

Madame N——, who writes charmingly in the *Petit Niçois* under the pseudonym of Berthe Mendès, has an article to-day in which, after an elaborate analysis of the problem, she decides that women who have been mishandled and rendered enceinte by "Boche" soldiers, have the right to prevent the child from being born, and the law should recognise this right.

An English major who is stopping at the Hôtel — told General X—— yesterday that while he thought the Allies would in the end win, he did not believe that they could crush Germany or get all the peace terms they hoped for.

The first departure of invalided British officers returning from Nice to the front took place to-day, for they only come for a month. One of them at least goes back worse than he came, for the weather in Nice has been a great disappointment.

*Feb. 25th.*—The idea of making Albert I of Belgium King of the French and the Belgians after the war is apparently gaining ground, at any rate to the extent of arousing wide discussion. The French censorship does not seem ill-disposed towards the idea, to judge from the fact that the *Petit Niçois* to-day publishes a note on the subject extracted from an Italian paper.

General X—— showed a letter to-day which he has received from P. J——, the well-known painter, who has an American wife, and is a prominent figure in smart Parisian society. He is at the front as an interpreter with the British. He says that while admitting the British superiority in accoutrement and commissariat, the “French soldier is infinitely superior to the British (fuller explanations to be given verbally), and that it is the French who will have won the war in spite of the boasted two million of Kitchener’s Army which England may or may not send over. This is the great fact to be borne in mind.”

As if in answer to this statement, a burly English officer, with Transvaal War medals, looking more

like a German than an Englishman, took a seat next to us at the Café — and entered into conversation. He said that the French were no good at all, that he would sooner shake hands with one German than a thousand Frenchmen. The French would go ahead if they were sure of victory, but if there were any doubt about it, the British always had to back them up, stiffen them, and that was what was meant by being ordered to rear-guard duty. The French soldiers' one idea was dinner; they had no discipline, and no respect for their officers. The Germans could take Ypres any day they liked (why? because they had countless spies in Ypres, who kept them informed of every movement of their enemy); and he thought that the war would end in July, when England would get the German fleet, which was all she wanted, and Germany would keep Belgium. Kitchener's Army did not amount to more than 600,000 men.

Two contradictory points of view! "Deux écoles!" This officer thought, moreover, that it would be possible to bring the war to a close only when the Allies were able by arrangement with the Dutch to pass through Holland. What seems to have principally set him against the French was the unhygienic condition in which, he declared, they invariably left their trenches.

*Feb. 26th.*—De B—— has heard from a French friend at the front that what is wearing the army out more than anything else is the bad weather—seven months of it without interruption. "La boue est pire que les Boches," says his correspondent. It is a long, weary business for the men to pull



their booted feet out of it, the horses have to be dragged out by cranes mounted on stout wooden poles, and he is sick to death of the war.

Th——, who is at the Prefecture, said to-day that, according to official news received there, England now has 1,200,000 men at the front, mostly in Belgium, and that the great forward movement of the Allies against the Germans is to start on the 1st of March, after which date Joffre will require 160,000 shells per day. I greatly doubt this news being official, for there is no obvious reason why the Government should make such a communication specially to the Prefect at Nice.

Yesterday the syndicate of bakers of Nice went to the Prefect and told him that unless he fixed the minimum price for bread at 50 centimes per kilo (two pounds) the bakers' shops would all close. Their threat had its effect, the Prefect gave in to them, and now the price of the kilo of bread has been officially raised by one sou, or a halfpenny.

*Feb. 27th.*—The cause of the one sou rise in the price of bread is attributed to the fact that, owing to the war, the ships importing wheat from America cannot load a return cargo. Hence the price of flour has risen within the past fortnight from 42 francs 50 centimes per quintal to 47 and 48 francs.

An unpleasant impression has been produced here, and to judge from what one reads, throughout the whole of France, by the information in the English papers that the British Government gives licences in certain cases for the purchase of German goods through the agency of neutral countries. The English Government thus breaks its own law, the

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Royal decree against trading with the enemy, which gave so much satisfaction to the French when it was promulgated. Is it legal, or simply honest, this winking at the German dealer over the dead body of the English soldier? It is on all fours with the Donington Hall scandal, and the extravagant cockering of German prisoners whose hands are still dripping with the blood of Belgian women, children, and old men, and of murdered British prisoners? Here the French can hardly believe it. Ready as they are to pick holes in their own administration, and to accuse their own Ministers of favouritism and negligence, the anarchy, which would be comic if it were not so tragic, prevailing in England passes their comprehension, and almost their belief. The influence which naturalised German financiers still continue to exercise in governing circles in England is something they cannot grasp, and upsets all their old-fashioned and preconceived notions as to the purity of British political morals, and the dignity and stability of our political institutions.

The British Government, blundering and wrong-headed as usual, whenever a matter involving German mentality is concerned, is now talking of the time having come for reprisals against German prisoners if British prisoners are not better treated. This is just what the Germans want, for then they could say: "You are as bad as we are;" and their responsibility would cease.

How very exceptional the weather has been in Nice this winter is shown by the fact of Thorenc, a neighbouring village, being blocked by snow, while at Peira Cava, also not more than sixty kilo-

metres from Nice, seventy persons, including women and children, have been cut off from all communication with the outer world for the past twenty days. Hitherto when this happened there have been Alpine Chasseurs who went to the rescue, but these are now all at the front, so that the situation of the unfortunate villagers is almost desperate.

*Feb. 28th.*—A most depressing Sunday, with a sense of impending catastrophe and loss. De B—— expressed his huge delight this afternoon at having learned from his customary military authority that at last the real “turpinite” is being used. At last! This accounts, he believes, for the recent advance of the French on their Western front, and is also to be taken as the reply to the German use of flaming petroleum in their attack upon the French trenches.

Our imaginations are all excited by the siege which is now being made of Constantinople, for the attack on the Dardanelles is a first phase of it. This should be the most romantic chapter in the war, and its immensely dramatic historical importance does not seem to have won sufficient appreciation from the London newspapers, busy with their grandiloquent “faking” of Western war scenes. It means—if it succeeds—the final triumph of the Christian over the Mussulman, the aims and ambitions of the Crusaders achieved in our lifetime, the rescue from infidel hands of the Holy Sepulchre, the return of all the Jews to Palestine, in conformity with the Biblical prediction. It will be the revenge of the Middle Ages. What a blow to William and his little tribal god should this be one of the out-

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comes of the Holy war against him and his allies, and should coincide with his own fraudulent apostasy to Mohammedanism by special licence of that same little tribal god of the Germans.

*March 1st.*—Letters from both S—— with Kitchener's Army and J. de B—— at the front. S—— expects to join the French in three or four weeks' time. He is having glorious weather. J. de B—— is still at the ambulance, but expects to leave it soon, as his wound is almost closed. The few days he has spent there have been a welcome rest. The patients are very well fed, and that is a change from the food they get in the trenches.

*March 2nd.*—In this awful war time, certain facts have to be looked sternly and straightly in the face, and an attempt to veil them or to treat them as shocking to polite ears would be more loathsome in its prurient prudishness and vulgarity than is the subject itself. The French are not handling the matter with any false delicacy, and everywhere the question is being discussed as to what should be the attitude, what are the moral and human rights of the unfortunate women who have been the victims of German satyrism and are now suffering from its consequences. Madame N—— has already published her opinion that these women should be allowed to solve the problem as each thinks fit, and as she asked my view on the subject I gave it, that every woman has absolute right to control her own body, and that even the divine dispensation intends that she should: it is part of the free arbitrament proper to her womanhood; furthermore, that the

doctors are making a misuse of terms when they talk of a child being alive before it is born. There is no real complete life apart from consciousness, thought, and a separate existence. No child should be called living before it is born.

The Countess is of the opinion that if the act of the woman who suppresses the token of the outrage to which she has been submitted by the German invader is to be severely punished it will be very widely practised, but very little if it be tolerated.

*March 3rd.*—Our Swiss Delegate, Count de H——, has heard on reliable authority that the total number of women violated by Huns in France and Belgium, who are now enceinte, is 60,000. He related several shocking instances of such women now refugees in Nice, the details of which are unpublishable in English, and more's the pity.

*March 4th.*—Took a walk with N——. N—— said that the Belgians were “au-dessous de tout.” He has learned from the French War Office that the advance movement by Joffre will shortly be made at seven points at once, of which one point will be decided on at the last moment, and kept a profound secret, and it is there that the enemy's line will be broken. He too has heard what has been told me by different eye-witnesses, that the African and Indian troops first of all displayed a kind of superstitious fear of the high-explosive shells, but I imagine that they must have got over this by now.

Pallain, the Governor of the Banque de France, told him that France is spending one milliard of

francs per month on the war, that he has a reserve of nine milliards of francs in gold in the bank, and that the country can get along for three or four months more by means of the Bons de Trésor without touching this reserve. General X—— remarked afterwards that this seemed to be a fair calculation, for compared with the statement of the British Prime Minister that Great Britain is spending £2,000,000 pounds sterling a day, it would show that the British expenditure is about one-third greater than that of France. This tallies with what is known about it.

## CHAPTER VI

*A French novelist's impressions of the front : What suits the French workman : Poincaré's humanitarianism : Toads in the trenches : Verminous Germans : Ex-Crown Prince of Serbia's views on the war : His wound : Provisioning Germany through Genoa : Netting submarines : French popular in Bavaria : German militarism cannot be crushed : Yankee's praise of England : Dismissed French generals to be rehabilitated : Whistles for wounded : Why the Garibaldians were disbanded : The old Garibaldian of Nice*

*March 5th.*—This morning I met A——, the well-known author of ——, at P——'s. He has grown a thick stubbly beard after the most approved fashion of the "poilus," and if he had not hailed me and explained who he was I should not have recognised him. He has returned from the front on a brief health furlough. He had been temporarily blinded by a "marmite," and is suffering from general fatigue. He has promised to give me an account of his adventures to-morrow.

*March 6th.*—I met A—— again by appointment. He went to the war as a volunteer but says that after a man has passed his first youth he is very little good as a soldier. "I am going back again

in a day or two," he added rather mournfully, " but not with any enthusiasm. It is not that I am afraid of death or wounds. As you know, I have been through many adventures on sea and land in all parts of the world, but it is the feeling that one has no longer the vital energy or the physical force to be constantly equal to the situation, which is depressing. I should not be sorry to come back. The life in the trenches is too rough for any one who has not been accustomed all his life to roughing it. Of course I am speaking solely from the point of view of the private. The life bears less hardly on the officer, even of the most subaltern rank. All sorts of little things are made easy to him, and these little things mean so much to one who like myself has for years past been engaged in quiet literary pursuits. On the other hand, the life suits the French workman down to the ground, for it enables him to give free rein to his natural instinct to be dirty."

" But I should have thought if you had liked you could easily have got a commission, with your name and influence."

" No, because all my life long I never asked a favour of anybody. To get a commission I should have to pass through the various non-commissioned ranks, and it is only by an act of extraordinary heroism, and even that requires opportunity, that I could win a sub-lieutenancy on the field of battle. My captain did come to me, and having learned who I was, he suggested making me a corporal, but I thanked him, and said no. As a private I have no responsibility, and I enjoy far more freedom and leisure time than I should as a



non-commissioned officer, and I told the captain, 'Mon capitaine, I shall always do my duty and obey any order that you give me, but I don't feel that I have the energy to perform the brilliant action which could alone secure me commissioned rank, and the relative conditions of comfort that go with it. So don't expect that of me.' And he seemed quite to understand, and did not bear me any grudge." A—— criticised Poincaré for not having prevented the officers from organising, in his honour, a night attack which resulted in a loss of 1800 men out of 4000. This attack was described in the official "communiqué" as "having consolidated the French position," though it did nothing of the kind. The men grumbled. Poincaré pretends to have such a horror of taking life of even the smallest thing that breathes that he has suppressed, so far as he is personally concerned, the "shoots" at Rambouillet, but he nevertheless had not the sense to see that this night attack had been arranged by the "high commandment" to show him some of the realities of war "as at a cinema," said the soldiers, and he ought to have countermanded it, or at least to have refused to be an onlooker. But his curiosity got the better of his humanity. A—— added that he had been for years an admirer and also a protégé of the President's, but this incident, coupled with the undignified flight to Bordeaux, had made a great alteration in his feelings. He thought too that the President had given far too little of his large fortune to alleviate the distress of the French and Belgian refugees.

Describing his life in the trenches, A—— said there was no vermin in the trenches that he had

occupied, but any quantity of rats, and particularly of toads, the latter being especially disgusting. The three literary and journalistic syndicates to which he belonged had behaved very generously to him, for, as he was a volunteer, and consequently debarred from continuing his literary occupations, they had in different instalments advanced him in all an important sum.

Later in the day I met young René N——, now a probationary lieutenant, and he confirmed A——'s statement as to the relative cleanliness of the French trenches, which, after what the burly English officer had said, astonished me a good deal, but a verminous condition, said René N——, was particularly characteristic of the German trenches. A proof of this was that some of the French recruits, whom it had recently been his duty to instruct, were obliged, owing to the lack of French knapsacks, to use for drilling purposes knapsacks taken from German prisoners. These are made of hairy cows' hide, and they were found to be so teeming with lice that the use of them had to be abandoned.

*March 7th.*—Count de H—— made an interesting report to-day to the Committee of International Safety, of which he is the Swiss Delegate, of a conversation which he has just had with the ex-Crown Prince of Serbia, now staying at Monte Carlo and recovering from a wound he has received in the war. Although, by the way, the wound affects the leg, the energetic Prince, to prevent the leg muscles from stiffening, walks every day from Monte Carlo to Nice and back, about twenty miles. The Prince does not think that the war can be over before a

year's time, his chief reason being that Russia, owing to defective railway communication, cannot furnish her army rapidly enough with what it chiefly needs—rifles and ammunition. Russia, moreover, suffers from a lack of officers. She has all the men she wants, and good generals, but there is a scarcity of ordinary regimental officers. For the present moment, Serbia can do nothing against Austria and Austria nothing against Serbia, on account of the floods which separate the frontiers of the two countries. Russia fills up all the gaps in her army with ease, but it will be some time, perhaps a long time, before she will be able to efficiently equip a really crushing force. He was of the opinion that the Allies will not be able to drive the Germans out of France and Belgium without terrific losses, which they may hesitate to incur. Should they, however, succeed in this, there would be another very sanguinary series of engagements to be fought on the banks of the Rhine. The Prince disbelieved the reports that the Germans were lacking in food, his reason being that the Germans are such a methodical people that as they knew they were going to have war they must have taken adequate precautions in advance to tide over at least a seven-months' food consumption until the new harvest could be gathered in. In his opinion the Germans were pretending to be short of food for feeding the civilian population with the idea of inducing the Allies to let them take in cargoes, ostensibly of food, but really of materials for manufacturing ammunition, which is far more important to them just now than food. It had come to his knowledge that large quantities of commodities of

all sorts were being furnished to Germany from depots in Genoa, which reached Germany by through transit to Holland via Switzerland and Germany. By arrangement with the Dutch consignee these consignments were unloaded in Germany, where they remained, after which the cases containing them were sealed up again and sent on to Holland empty. As the addressee made no complaint when his cases arrived duly sealed up, but empty, the Dutch Government did not think itself called upon to interfere. No doubt if Russia had been more effectively organised she would have made a much better showing.

It was also through our Swiss Delegate that the welcome news reached us, curiously confirming General X——'s prevision, that within the past few days seven German submarines had been caught in the English Channel *with nets*. This fact is being officially kept secret for the present. X—— maintained that a submarine running into a sufficiently strong net would capsize and founder.

A——, whose convalescence visit to Nice is drawing to a close, says that some of the French soldiers garrisoned here complain that they are badly fed. I can hardly believe this, for every day a large crowd of poor people assembles outside the different barracks, and is fed with what is left over from the kitchens, but A—— says that the soldiers whom he heard complaining may have meant that the food was not of the kind they were accustomed to, or badly prepared.

At lunch the Countess showed me a card she had received from her son, who has now left the hospital and gone to stop with his grandparents at Lyons.

The humorous surgeon of the hospital had written on it in red ink the following indication of the invalid's condition: "Mal au cœur à cause de départ" (Sick at heart on account of leaving).

A country walk with the Countess in the afternoon showed that everything is still exceptionally backward, and there are very few flowers out. Nature is wise to sleep as long as possible through this horrible period, and it is a pity we cannot follow her example.

General X—— described to me the good feeling for the French which he had found everywhere in Bavaria just before and just after the war broke out. His French chauffeur, though a ferocious patriot, cheerfully admits that in every garage in Bavaria where he put up his car—this was before the war—he was received with wild welcome as a Frenchman and given the best of accommodation. At Munich, after the war broke out, X—— noticed that the Bavarians he talked to showed no enthusiasm even over the news that the first great battle had been won by their own Bavarian Crown Prince. They would even have preferred the French to have won. All this is very strange to me. He admits, however, that the Bavarians make up for their love of the French by their bitter hatred of the English.

X—— agreed that it is silly to talk of crushing German militarism—militarism being as ingrained in the German character as footballism, or golfism, or other equivalent forms of dufferism, in the modern English character. It may be possible to destroy her Prussianism, but even this is not—as some foolish English politicians, including responsible

Ministers, persist in saying—a burden laid by a bloated aristocracy on the people, but a system which has its origin in the national Prussian character as a whole, and is in complete harmony with it. To this Prussianism will be due the fact that even should Germany be in the end beaten she will have been within an inch of beating the nations that she has attacked. She was one strong, admirably organised nation against three big, but rickety nations, each rickety for a different cause, and all three disorganised or not organised, and these three by joining hands have just managed to beat down her first attack, but the superiority of her national “vis,” which so nearly enabled her to win, is incontestable. It is just this which the Germans have attained to by what they call “Kultur.” X—— finally said that the English had always been somewhat repellent to him on account of their coldness, but with all their faults, and though he was himself a typical old Yankee, he considered the British, taking them all round, to be by a very long way the greatest nation in the world.

Maître R——, who is the legal councillor of the Nice Committee of Nations and is in touch with important sources of information, told us to-day that a slight misunderstanding has arisen between the French Government and General Joffre as to who shall have the command of the French Expeditionary Force to the Dardanelles. Of the 100,000 men who approximately constitute the allied force, about 50,000 are French and the rest British. General Joffre wanted to give the command to General Gouraud, who has distinguished himself

greatly in Africa, but Millerand and Poincaré insisted on its being conferred on General d'Amade, and they have had their way. The Maître says that this is the commencement of the public rehabilitation of some of the numerous generals who were "put on foot," as they themselves think unjustly, after the first disasters of the war. Among these is the much discussed General Percin. General d'Amade was also one of them. He thinks that political reasons played too much a part in their downfall. To set against this theory of the Maître's, is the certainty that General Joffre was not actuated by political motives in getting rid of them, which would tend to show that more likely it is their rehabilitation which is in the nature of a political job. It is certain that if politics are again allowed to exercise a decisive influence in the conduct of the war the consequences will be disastrous.

It is characteristic of the mentality—so different from the French—which still governs British institutions that at the trial which has just finished of a British firm accused of having libelled a manufacturer of German origin, though naturalised British, but still established commercially in Germany, the judge, in summing up, directed the jury to consider the question as if both plaintiff and defendant were British-born; in other words, from a point of view which, if it were put forward as a statement of fact, would be a deliberate misstatement of fact. Needless to add that the humble British jury obeyed this direction like sheep, and mulcted the patriotic British firm in heavy damages. No French jury would have done that.

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*March 8th.*—The champagne commission agent from Reims to whom I have already referred is going to the front in two days. He has purchased a whistle, for whistles, he says, have proved of great use to the wounded in attracting attention from the Red Cross men.

*March 9th.*—The disbandment of the Garibaldian Legion is causing talk. Officially it is said to be due to a desire on the part of the French Government not to deprive Italy of any of the soldiers upon whom she may eventually have to count. On the other hand, this is said to be only a pretext, the real reason being that a good many black sheep had crept into the ranks of the Legion, who were more dangerous to their friends than to their foes, some of them even, it is said, deserting to the enemy with valuable information. The handling of volunteers in a country not their own is always difficult. I am reminded of an incident which came under my notice in the first Græco-Turkish War of 1897. On the morning of a false alarm that the Turks were about to enter Arta on the Græco-Turkish frontier, I strolled through the town and came across a company of red-tunicked Garibaldians busily engaged in pillaging a Greek orange orchard, which they had been told off to guard. But solemnly pacing up and down in the road, doing this neglected guard duty all by himself, was a stalwart Garibaldian who, on my approaching him, revealed himself to be an Englishman. In a marked midland accent he told me that as his comrades had refused to listen to his appeals to do their duty he was trying to set them a good example regardless of



their laughter and gibes. His name, he told me, was Newbolt. I was sorry to read at the beginning of the last Græco-Turkish War that faithful to his love for Greece, Newbolt had again gone to her assistance, and this time had been killed. De B——, to whom I related this, said, almost with tears in his eyes: "Do you know that's a very fine story!" Which it undoubtedly is.

*March 10th.*—A—— has heard from a friend who is at Avignon, where the Garibaldians' depot is, that one of the reasons of their disbandment was a violent scene which took place between a Legioner and the local police, with the result that the other Garibaldians stormed the lock-up where he had been confined and rescued him. A—— added that though the Garibaldians were a rough lot there is no doubt that the foreigners who have enlisted under the French flag find it difficult to conform to the very severe discipline which has always been traditional in the Foreign Legion, and is now extended to the foreign troops generally. The French non-commissioned officer is often a sad tyrant, and A—— related an incident which had come under his notice of a French sergeant in the Foreign Legion shouting to a Russian volunteer who had done something he disapproved of: "Were you starving in your own country that you thought you'd fill your belly at our expense?" Whereupon the Russian showed him a bundle of bank-notes, and said that it was not to earn money that he had come to fight for France. Of course no general deductions should be drawn from isolated incidents like this, but I understand that the Englishmen

who have been enlisted in the Foreign Legion will soon be invited to re-enlist in Kitchener's Army, or at any rate left free to do so if they wish.

A curious detail given me by A——, which is worth noting, is that most of the illness in the trenches is confined to the youngest recruits, who seem to lack resisting power.

In the afternoon a very ragged band of Garibaldians passed through Nice on their way to the railway station to take train for Italy. Some of them wore portions of French uniforms with the Italian colours as arm-bands, or in their buttonholes. One of them was humorously shouldering a toy gun with the trigger torn out. With few exceptions their physique seemed to be poor. On their way they met a Garibaldian officer, who harangued and shook hands with them from a cab. They bore but little resemblance to "the old Garibaldian," who since the war began has been one of the picturesque figures of Nice. It was on the first day of mobilisation in last August that I observed coming down the shady side of the street a strange figure which might have been that of a child dressed up in one of the fancy costumes which are so common, in and out of season, in this city of Carnival. But when it approached I found it was that of a diminutive but very old man, with but one arm, his breast covered with medals. He was an old Garibaldian, one of the few survivors of the original Legion. He wore, of course, the original red tunic, which with age had become a delicate pink, and an old-fashioned red military cap with a broad flat peak, and the gilt braid of a lieutenant's rank. It looked disproportionately small, perched jauntily on the top of

his head, from which depended a great mass of white hair mingling with an equally long white beard. What a sweet and noble tradition he recalled, the heroism of self-sacrifice in the sacred cause of liberty—"per la Libertà!" this veteran of 1847!

## CHAPTER VII

*Two British officers risen from the ranks : The humours of accents : Other people's business : A secret plan of attack : How it feels to be buried alive : What the Nice barber said : The business man as colonel : Jews in the army : The real "turpinite" : Nationalising factories an idea borrowed from France : Intentions of Italy : Lack of ammunition : Flying the Welsh Flag : Effect of war on champagne and liquor trade*

*March 11th.*—At the Café — the burly sergeant-looking officer, with whom we have already conversed, came in, this time accompanied by a friend, also a lieutenant, both former "rankers," and consumed a good deal of whisky proffered them by General X—. Both were really quite nice fellows. Huge No. 1, seemed anxious to tone down the verdict he had pronounced on the average Frenchman, which is due to a feeling born of accidental irritation, causing momentary forgetfulness of the many great and good and charming and incomparable qualities of the really representative Frenchman. He spoke with the strongly pronounced Cockney accent which it is such a pleasure to listen to after a long absence from London. There are only two local accents in the world which are saturated with humour, and those are the Cockney and the Niçois accents. My old

friend Torrero, who, being the proprietor of the one really good restaurant which remains in the world, is naturally a man of infinite artistic perceptions, once pointed out to me how superior was the Niçois accent in humour to either the French or the Italian, to both of which it is allied, and he selected, for example, the familiar exclamation "Tonnerre de Dieu!" In French, evidently, this oath, which was the favourite of William the Conqueror, is superbly blasphemous, but it is too melodramatic: it lacks humour. The Italian equivalent, "Porco Dio," is merely brutal, but "Troun-e de Dio," which is the Niçois version, what subtle laughter lurks within its depths, rich, warm, and perfumed like an old vintage wine. The Cockney discovered from the very first that humour is incompatible with h's. The Scotchman doubles, trebles h's, and Lamb has told us what kind of a humorist is the Scotchman. Here is the most likely explanation of the Cockney dropping of the h, unless it be that blood, having a sinking and penetrative power superior to that of almost any other liquid—a physical detail which General X—— was enlarging on only yesterday—the old Norman French blood of the Conquest, which was that of a race incapable even to this day of pronouncing an h, now lives exclusively and purely in the veins of the so-called lower classes. The advantage of this theory is that it definitely destroys the claims of the snobbish aspirate to an aristocratic origin. (Fancy, in the days of Bulwer Lytton it was looked upon by the smart set as a *wulgarism* not to say *hour*!)

To return to our invalided British officers,

Lieutenant No. 2, of much slighter build, had rid himself of the broader distinctions of accent, and he talked with that delicate preciosity, accompanied by occasional disconcerting lapses, which is noticeable, as a rule, in the speech of the refined type of lady's maid. Both of them were gentlemen to the finger-tips, but they had retained this eminent British peculiarity, which one would have thought wide travel and "rolling one's hump," as the French say, in India and Africa, and many other parts of the world, would have obliterated, of censoriously and almost indignantly criticising other people's occupations. During his visit to the Café R——, No. 1 had already remarked severely, and No. 2 independently made the same observation, on the number of people, mostly elderly men, who were playing cards. "Who are all these people playing cards?" (Indignant sniff.)—"Well, they are inhabitants of Nice, local tradespeople probably, who meet for a quiet rubber at the same place every afternoon."—"But can't they find something better to do than to play cards?"—"It's a French custom!"—"Humph!"

Lieutenant No. 1, having consoled himself for this deplorable state of things with a swig of whisky, became anecdotic. What he said about Liége, and the nationality of the gunners there during the siege, I will for the time being suppress. He said, thereby confirming what N—— had told me, that a big forward movement by the Allies on the Western front was in contemplation, that an attack was to be made at seven different places, of which the seventh, where the enemy's line was to be pierced, was to be kept a secret. He assured

me, however, in a whisper that this place was Holland, though he could not explain how the British Government could make up its mind to violate Dutch neutrality. Perhaps it would leave the French to do that, he thought. No. 1, though he admitted that he looked well, ate well, drank well, and in the day-time felt well, said that the least thing fatigued him, and that he had no energy left. For this reason he did not want to go back to the front, and had secured a post at Havre. His friend (Lieutenant No. 2) had had one foot frozen, and had been buried by the explosion of a shell. He had admitted to Lieutenant No. 1 that when he was buried he cried like a child, and had had a vision of his wife and children. This is precisely the description of the sensations produced by burial related by the butcher of the Boulevard G——. In the day-time Lieutenant No. 2 can walk well, but at night his foot swells up "like a small football," and causes him agony so acute as to bring tears.

Talking of the French, Lieutenant No. 1 said that the French non-commissioned officers were, as a rule, difficult to get on with on account of their interfering, domineering ways, and the English found that the less intercourse they had with them the better; but they were easily "pally" with the French private soldiers. He told us that one of the captains belonging to his regiment, who is convalescent in Nice, went to a Nice hairdresser's to have his hair clipped, and the impudent barber told him that the British Army had been of no use at all, and that all the work done at the front was solely attributable to the French. This had

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so affected the captain, who was weakened by his wound, that it nearly made him cry ; he passed a sleepless night, and for a long time could talk of nothing else.

No. 1 said that he got on very well with his brother officers, who were ready to treat the ex-ranker on perfectly equal terms, as long as he did not tactlessly try to impress them with the superiority of his military experience and knowledge, which were, of course, real, relatively to many of them. They were, in fact, very kind to him, more so than his former comrades in the sergeants' mess had been. For instance, if he took a hand at cards so as not to be out in the cold, and lost, say, 100 francs, which was a good deal for a man with a wife and children and only a lieutenant's pay to support them on, his brother officers would in the most delicate way make it up to him in one way or another. Perhaps they would offer him an expensive cigarette, and, when he praised it, force a box upon him on the ground that they had more than enough to spare, and that he would not be able to get any similar ones sent out. Also other little things like that. He said that the British officer of the Regular Army had an ideal of conduct which might well be imitated in civil life. He was both strictly fair and generous, and would not sacrifice another man's legitimate interests to his own. For instance, his own colonel had been a territorial, and when another colonel asked him if he could recommend an officer for some special work which required experience and skill, and would bring promotion with it, the ex-territorial, fearing that if he allowed No. 1 to go more work or responsibility would accrue to



himself, said that he knew of no such officer fit to undertake the duties in question. He thereby spoiled No. 1's chance of a rise. "Ah," said I, "no doubt that territorial colonel had been a 'business man' in private life."—"Just so," said No. 1, "you've hit it exactly: he was a Liverpool manufacturer and looked at the question *purely as a matter of business*, while a regular colonel, though sorry to lose a valuable officer, would have said, 'let the man have his chance.' It's very difficult to express, but there is something about the . . . point of view of the British regular officer which is very fine."

Like all talkative people, if we are to believe the *Arabian Nights*, No. 1 has a brother, about whose talents and prowess he talked a great deal. This brother, who had also risen from the ranks, was now a captain, and expected to come out of the war, if he survived, *at least a major*!

*March 13th.*—A——, whom I do not suspect of having any prejudice against the Jews, says, nevertheless, that few of them are at the front. They are nearly all "embusqués," that is to say, do stop-at-home garrison work, which does not prevent them, however, from getting promotion, so that many of those who started at the beginning of the war as privates are now sub-lieutenants, without ever having been within sound of gun-fire. He thinks that this is unfair, and is attributable to the influence of politics.

De B—— is a step nearer to a perfect knowledge of the real nature of "turpinite," which has exercised his mind for so many months. His expert artillery

friend has definitely assured him that it is an explosive that kills by concussion. It has an explosive force of 600 kilos (approximately 1200 pounds) to the square centimetre. It is due to this that it kills without producing an outwardly visible wound, which has made some lay observers suppose that it acted by asphyxiation. All the soft interior parts of the man killed by its action, such as the brain and the intestines, are reduced by the violence of the concussion to a mash.

Our Swiss Delegate has learned to-night that no fewer than 300,000 Galician Jews fleeing from the Russians have taken refuge in Vienna. What an escape for London! Black as the war-cloud is it is not without a silver lining.

One of the halfpenny papers, in an article by Mr. Petter, M.I.Mech.E., says that Mr. George's new scheme for running the engineering factories of England in the interest of the Army for making ammunition, etc., is "the first attempt in the history of the world to nationalise an industry of such magnitude." The writer is apparently unaware that this method has long ago been adopted in France, where all the engineering works have been mobilised under military discipline and surveillance by the French War Office. He would find on inquiry that Renault's great motor-car works have been turning out nothing but shells for months past, that others of the great motor-car factories in France are manufacturing nothing but "chassis" for armoured motor-cars, and so forth. Even here a simple repair to a private car can only be undertaken by one of the shops if no military work happens to be in hand. The military job takes

precedence, and an official of the War Office is on the spot to see that it is done without the slightest delay. Mr. George, who has been over to this country once or twice of late, most probably got the idea of his new Bill from the French, and has neither invented nor inaugurated anything new. It is well to give credit where it is due.

*March 15th.*—The Marquis de F—— (our Italian Delegate), who has returned from San Remo, remarked to the committee to-day that the idea of Italy joining the Germans against us (this fear has actually been expressed here) was unthinkable. The only question is whether she will remain neutral or join the Triple Entente. He thinks that she will have to make up her mind before Constantinople falls, otherwise it will be too late. But there is a margin of time, for Constantinople is not expected to fall for at least another month. On the Italian frontier precautions with respect to passports have become much more stringent of late on account of the vast number of German and Austrian spies that have taken up their quarters there. The Marquis, in the conversations which he has in Italian hotels with casual restaurant acquaintances of German nationality, never fails to let them know his opinion as to their methods of warfare. He accuses them of belonging to a nation of spies and pirates with a bitterness which often makes them weep. He told us that the most abominable thing of which Germany has been guilty from the purely Italian point of view has been the dispatch to the Tripolitan rebels of arms hidden in beer-barrels—and arms of French and

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English make—in the mean hope that when these were found by the Italian soldiers in possession of their dead foes an idea would be created that France and England had treacherously furnished them.

Count de H—— has received a letter from a French officer at the front upon whose cool-headed judgment he has the greatest reliance. This officer says that the German front is weakening all along the line, and that a strong effort will suffice to drive it in. That the effort has not yet been made is perhaps explained to some extent by the letter I received this morning from L——'s sister. In it she says that her brother, who was to have left for the front with the heavy artillery three weeks ago, is still at the depot of his regiment near Vincennes. This is due to a lack of ammunition. No doubt George's expressed anxiety to induce the factories in England to work as hard as possible on the production of what he calls "equipment" is due to a lack of ammunition throughout the entire Allied armies.

There are such persistent rumours abroad that the British Government is already preparing to consider peace negotiations with Germany that in reply to inquiries on the subject from our international circles of friends it seemed to me that the question might be approached thus: first and foremost I do not believe that British opinion would for a moment tolerate such a betrayal. On the other hand, there are undoubtedly men in the Cabinet who are capable of preaching as an excuse for such a policy that the funds of the country are running low; that the expenditure of two million

pounds per day cannot be continued for an unlimited time ; that Germany has undergone such losses that she will never want another war ; that her fleet, supposing that she bound herself not to add to it, would be superannuated in ten years' time ; that if the war can only be won by the intervention of Italy and the smaller States, this would mean such an increase of power to these States after the war that they would constantly threaten the peace of Europe ; that England cannot lend any more money to her Allies. These are specimens of the specious arguments which, if not yet broached, will sooner or later be insinuated into the public ear from influential sources. The cosmopolitan financial influences in England with their German origin or associations have lost nothing of their power. The favours extended to Germans by the British Government, the hesitation to take the only rational steps for forcing Germany to act squarely according to the rules of war and international treaty, are proofs of this : they are worthy to be placed in the same category with the lights which are flashed by traitors from the British coasts, with this difference, that they are flashed from Westminster. They are the sly grins which certain British commercial and cosmopolitan magnates pass over to their former and prospective German customers across the bleeding body of poor simple-minded heroic Thomas Atkins. One of the London papers tells us that the Welsh flag has been hoisted over an official Ministerial residence in Downing Street. The interpretation which the Germans will put upon that Welsh flag is that beneath the roof from which it is flown there is a gentleman eager to show that he is not an

Englishman, and they will remember that he was a friend of the Boers at the same time that the Kaiser was, though he has now officially admitted that but for the British possession of the Transvaal goldfields, England could not have carried on the war. And if they had any lingering doubt as to the accuracy of their interpretation of this flag-flying it would be removed by simply reflecting on what would happen to a German Minister if he hoisted on the roof of an Imperial Ministerial building in the Imperial capital any other than the German flag—the Polish or the Bavarian flag, for instance. Already both Germans and Italians are speaking with positiveness of the approach of a Peace Congress, and what they will do at it. It is not easy to believe that both of them are under a complete delusion on the subject. Between them they must have information which they can rely upon. No doubt their political friends in England are keeping them well informed. There are signs, moreover, that the opposition in England is growing more and more suspicious of what the Government is secretly up to.

*March 17th.*—The war, we were told by a champagne agent to-day, has had a most disastrous effect upon the champagne trade. For instance, the famous Café R—— in Paris had been accustomed to sell about 160 bottles of champagne every day, but during the month of last December, which included Christmas Day, they had not sold twenty bottles during the entire month. The Germans in Reims had amused themselves by opening the taps of a certain number of vats full of “brut” cham-

pagne, and letting the contents run out ; they had also destroyed and drunk a great many bottles, but they had not destroyed the vineyards to any extent. Most of the damage to the vineyards had been caused by the French, unavoidably of course. The vineyard proprietors had even been surprised at the extreme honesty of the French soldiers, who had not taken any of the grapes. Another agent said that on an average each champagne firm of importance in Reims had lost 10,000 bottles, but no serious commercial consequences would ensue from this. It was not the intention of the trade to raise or lower the wholesale price. There had been a great reduction in the sales of all alcoholic liquor. He was the representative on the Riviera of a well-known brand of whisky, of which he sold last year 4000 cases of a dozen bottles, but this year only three cases.

## CHAPTER VIII

*Flowers for the dead : New regulations for foreigners : General Mouravieff and the secret of General Schwartz : The Countess's son describes a battle : Allies still lack ammunition : " La Haine sacrée " : Noises of the battle-field : The British conscience : What forced the Government into the war : Caught in the toils of its own claptrap*

*March 18th.*—Now that flowers are becoming plentiful, the entrance-halls to the offices of the local papers here are full of perfume from the little bouquets which relatives have placed round the photographs exhibited there of the Niçois killed in the war.

*March 19th.*—The fear of espionage, though fully and more than justified, is beginning to cause some inconvenience to foreign residents here, who are now all obliged to have their photographs affixed to " permis de séjour," or residence permits. As there is a limited period within which this can be done, crowds have collected round the various police-stations and people have to wait in the queue for hours before they can be attended to.

*March 20th.*—A letter from L—— in which he says that he expects shortly to embark at Marseilles



for the Dardanelles. He adds: "Our departure has been retarded for a few days for we have not enough ammunition for so long a journey. It is to be hoped that our ships which are going to transport us will not sink with us."

*March 21st to 24th.*—The news of the fall of Przemyśl which reached here on the 24th was naturally the cause of great rejoicings. In the afternoon I went with de B—— to the Russian Club to hear General de Mouravieff-Amoursky deliver his last lecture on the war. He told us the sensational story of the defence of Ivanograd, which was essential to the Russians in beating off the German advance on Warsaw. It was the work of a Colonel Schwartz, since promoted to be a general, who, notwithstanding his German name, is a good Russian. He employed a secret method which had completely mystified the Germans. Colonel Schwartz was one of the heroes of the defence of Port Arthur, and has written standard books on fortress defence which have been translated and much studied in Germany. He defended Ivanograd with only two brigades of infantry against fifty-two German battalions. Originally the Germans had spoken of this fort disdainfully as "a heap of muck," but they were twice repulsed, first by fortress gun-fire, and then, after an inundation, by the fire of masked batteries which Colonel Schwartz manœuvred in the forests behind the fort to which he had withdrawn. How he managed to displace this artillery so as to be able constantly to mow down the advancing Germans is the "secret of Colonel Schwartz." The retreating Germans met

an advancing army of Austrians and maliciously bade them take Ivanograd, which was at its last gasp. The Austrians went gaily to the assault, but found the same reception as that which had awaited the Germans, and were, if anything, even more badly beaten. It was from that moment that they began to lose faith in their German allies. General de Mouravieff-Amoursky concluded his lecture by saying that the fall of Przemysl was not so important as it might seem, for all that Germany could henceforth do was to put up as lengthy a resistance as possible. In other words, Germany was now besieged on her Russian frontier, and this in its turn might be looked upon as practically putting an end to the war, for this siege, like that of Przemysl, must result finally in the victory of the besiegers.

*March 25th.*—The question of the “*permis de séjour*” is causing no little agitation among foreign residents and visitors here, who are certainly being put to a great deal of unnecessary inconvenience by the failure of the municipal authorities to provide a suitable organisation. They are apparently too sordid to go to the necessary expense. It is all very well to talk about war-time as being the excuse, and the greater inconveniences suffered by the troops in the trenches. Nobody would object to discomfort which was an inevitable outcome of the war conditions, but what is objected to is that these local functionaries should not think it obligatory on them to make such simple arrangements as are needed to save the aged and delicate from waiting for hours on end in the rain.

The Countess has received the following very

interesting and well-written letter from her son at the front :

" As for me, my wound is nearly closed, in fact I am practically well, for a wound heals quicker when one's health is good than when it is bad. I am sending you the ' communiqué ' of the day when I got my trade-mark. It was at Carnoy in the Somme. It was we who succeeded, after a check to four battalions, in taking a few trenches, but at what a price ! We had been warned overnight, and in spite of the successive annihilation of four battalions we charged like lions to the assault of the infernal war machine which is the German army. I shall remember it all my life. Our battalion suffered, alas, the fate of the others, but honour was safe, for we were able, where the others had failed, to take two trenches. The occupants surrendered, but in the rage that possessed us we massacred them like field vermin ( ' bêtes puantes ' ). We took two mitrailleuses. In this superhuman effort a battalion of 280 strong was reduced to twenty-three, plus the captain. The other officers, whom we were very fond of, died courageously at our head. I had the extraordinary luck which seems, I think so at least, never to leave me. Lying in a field of lucerne grass, I saw the sergeant of my section killed by an explosive bullet right in the stomach. He died crying ' Vive la France ! ' at less than two metres from me, for his blood stained my pouch. I had two dead to my left, one of them the corporal, struck by a bullet full in the forehead. To my right was a comrade hit by seven bullets consecutively. And finally the sergeant in front of me made a rampart for me with his poor body. I had

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dug a little trench where I sheltered my head. On getting up to ask for something, I forget now what, I received the wound which perhaps saved my life, for I was firing away without stopping, meaning to sell my skin dearly. Then I dropped everything and escaped by crawling. I was successful in doing what has caused the death of many others, namely, in crawling right up to our lines of trenches. With a bound I jumped in. I was saved. Such was the bloody aurora which marked the fine day of the 21st, for the sun, ironically, shone down very little afterwards on the field of battle. The 'communiqués' are exact. We have a formidable artillery, for on a single distance of three kilometres 172 pieces were lined up. I think I have accomplished my duty as well as I could, and that suffices me. I conclude this letter with a big kiss to you all round."

*March 26th.*—It is becoming only too obvious that the Allies are hard up for ammunition. One English paper makes an appeal to Mr. George to use his great oratorical talents in inducing the workmen of Great Britain to do the essential work, and to convert them to the necessity of military conscription. But it is obvious that the members of the Liberal Government have lost most of their authority with the electorate, for everything they could say would be in direct contradiction with what they have been accustomed to say. Only another Ministry could effect the desired result, and it is difficult to see how another Ministry could be formed without something in the nature of a revolution or a "coup d'état" happening first.

Could this be? If things continue to go from bad to worse as they are doing now, it will have to come. For neither France nor Russia will allow the present British Government to sneak out of its engagements and conclude a dishonourable peace with Germany on the simple excuse that the Liberal vote in England requires to be coddled.

It is satisfactory to note that French public opinion is waking up to the necessity of dealing with the German Emperor and his family after the war in the only way they have deserved, namely, by hanging them. "Shooting would be too good for them," says M. Jean de Malguénac to-day in an article entitled "*La Haine sacrée.*"

De B——, who has recently had a long conversation with a wounded and penniless soldier, invalided here, whom he met by chance and regaled with beer, for which he was very grateful, said that what the soldier had been most struck with on the battle-field was the extraordinary roar uttered by the men when the bugle-call was given them to charge. The buglers lie prone on the ground to sound the charge, and then there issues from the throats of these hundreds of men the most weird, fantastic yell imaginable, utterly unlike anything he had ever heard before, or could have thought possible to human beings, a kind of primitive bellow suggestive of humanity's earliest stages of bestial savagery.

*March 27th.*—An interview with Mr. George which appears in one of the London magazines repeats this Minister's statement already quoted in the French papers that "on the Saturday after the declaration

of war against France by Germany 95 per cent. of the British electorate was opposed to Great Britain's joining in." This, of course, is the typical misstatement of the professional platform misstatement-maker. To the credit of the British people this falsehood, that 95 per cent. of them, or anything like that proportion would have been willing to go back upon the moral engagements which the country had entered into with France, without a protest, cannot be too strenuously nailed to the counter. There is no politician in England, no special pleading lawyer, who will succeed in making the French people believe that the people of England are made up of 95 per cent. of rogues. What the attitude of the Cabinet might have been Mr. George is perhaps competent to tell us. But to pretend to have the consciences of 95 per cent. of the electorate in his pocket is grossly presumptuous. What is apparent is that Mr. George and his friends have no conception of the outburst of wrath which would have followed in France if Great Britain had really been false to engagements which, if not definitely cast in the form of a signed and sealed treaty of alliance, were none the less looked upon as definite and sincere on this side of the Channel. For years past every public act of the British Foreign Office with respect to Franco-German relations has been calculated to encourage France in the conviction that Great Britain would not stand by and see Germany fall upon and rend her without provocation. Had England proved untrue and not come to the rescue of France, the surprise and the disillusionment would have been so great and the anger against England so intense that the French

would have at once listened to a proposition from Germany, which would certainly have been made, to sink their differences and unite in attacking England.

Clearly what Mr. George is trying to do, and what the whole Cabinet is trying to do, is to reconcile a present situation with a past policy. As this is impossible, the Government has doomed itself to mismanage the war. As few of its motives are sincere its actions are half-hearted. When it was forced to go in with France on the pretext of protecting Belgium, it may not have been that the average Liberal voter cared a snap about Belgium any more than about Ulster (he was ignorant of the whole question), but because the bottom would have been knocked out of the Irish policy of the Government had it not done so. It could not plunge Great Britain into civil war for the sake of a high and mighty principle, and at the same time dishonour its signature to a document which applied the same principle to Belgium. The Liberal platform of humbug would have been blown sky-high. I told my French friends at the time that this dilemma would force the British Government's hand, and it did. I warned them against believing that the British Government (not to be confounded with the British people) had any more respect for signatures than Bethmann-Hollweg—the incident which led to the resignation before the war of Marshal French proved that, and as for the protection of little peoples, what about Serbia? It is quite right and proper that we should continue to assert that our sole cause for going to war was to honour our signature; that riles the Germans, and

no one can positively contradict it. But if we had not gone to war, even in the event of the neutrality of Belgium having been respected by Germany, our disgrace would have been indelible, eternal. I have no words in which to express the intense feeling of relief which at the time came over me when I grasped the fact that there was no way out of war for the British Government, no scope left for lawyers' quibbling or hypocritical rhetoric, and that England would act honourably whether her Liberal Government liked it or not. It seemed almost too good to be true. The way we English and French at Nice shook hands over it, and the gentle reproaches my French friends made to me that I had not been sufficiently optimistic! "After all," they said, "England had been, 'true unto herself,' as Shakespeare has it, and as every Frenchman knew she would be."—"Yes, yes, yes. You are right; I was wrong!" And the secret joy over it all, knowing as one did that the Government had been caught inextricably in the toils of its own claptrap.



## CHAPTER IX

*General de Castelnau's time-limit for the war : " Mort en lâche au champ d'honneur " : German poisoners in Alsace : Conditions of Lyons : More about " turpinite " : The Kaiser's blasphemy : Condoning murder in England : Psychology of the champions of forgiveness : A theological blunder : Why England is betrayed : The game of " Blind-man's Bluff " : Who works for Germany in France ? : Prospects of Peace : Effect of war on Corsica : " Look at the maps ! "*

March 28th.—Young I——, of the 7th Artillery Regiment here, which is now over 7000 strong, has been told by Lieutenant de Castelnau, son of the general, and here for a few days' rest, that in the opinion of his father people may think themselves lucky if the war is at an end by next December.

The Countess has returned from Marseilles after visiting her son. In the attack which he and his comrades made on the German trenches in which he was wounded, and all the officers of his company were killed with the exception of the captain, the latter owed his life to the fact that after the first charge he was obliged to return to his dug-out to transmit an order which he had forgotten. His own soldiers then prevented him from advancing, the enemy's fire being so intense. He is much loved by his men.

Soldiers, said Roger, who are shot by their own officers for flinching, have their deaths announced to their relatives with the dreadful formula, "mort en lâche au champ d'honneur."

The French army has now all the mitrailleuses that it requires, but at the beginning there was a lack of everything. At first, when the commissariat broke down, Roger and his comrades subsisted for several days on nothing but apple-jam, and found it quite sufficiently nourishing. His pocket-book was pierced by, and stopped, a German bullet, which would otherwise have killed him.

A young Italian girl who has been stopping with the Countess has just recovered from typhoid fever, caught at the Lyons hospital, where she was helping to tend the wounded. She says that among the patients were soldiers who had been poisoned under the following circumstances: they had been with the first French troops who entered Alsace at the beginning of the war. There they were received with the utmost enthusiasm by a number of the inhabitants and sumptuously entertained. These people gave themselves out to be Alsatians, but were in reality German settlers, and they deliberately poisoned their French soldier guests, many of whom died. Incredible as such atrocious treachery may seem, there can be no doubt about it, for the number of soldiers in the Lyons hospital suffering from undoubted poisoning thus administered is considerable, and the doctors are certain that it could not have been given otherwise than intentionally. The guilty consciences of these immeasurably vile Germans explains why they have always shown so much fear of being themselves poisoned

by the inhabitants of the French towns they have occupied.

At Lyons, where there is serious fear of a Zeppelin raid, all lights in the city are put out after nine o'clock in the evening.

It is officially announced to-day that a new explosive has recently been employed by the French artillery, which has increased its effectiveness ten-fold. Can this be "turpinite" at last? If so it has one peculiar characteristic which the Countess has ascertained from her son. It fattens those who handle it. Roger was very slight and slim when he went to the front a few weeks ago, and now he is quite fat, with a bad kind of fat. This tendency to get fat, in spite of hard work and privations, is general among the French soldiers, who attribute it to the effect of the chemicals used on both sides in the composition of the high-explosive shells. It has already been said that the workmen employed in manufacturing the new explosive—"turpinite," or whatever it may be—suffered from a swelling of all their exposed tissues. The explosive effect of the shell may also act on the tissues of the flesh and expand them. As it is, Roger suffers from constant headache, due to the noise of the gunfire. The Countess's only brother, a man of forty, has also been mobilised now: destination unknown.

*March 29th.*—The German Emperor's constant references to God as his personal friend are rank blasphemy, an offence known in Germany as "Gottesbeleidigung," which is just as severely punished there as "lèse-majesté," or "Majestätsbeleidigung." It would be a good idea to give the

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German Emperor at the end of the war six months' hard labour for this delinquency before hanging him.

*March 30th.*—The sinking of an English passenger ship with over a hundred passengers on board by a German submarine is deliberate murder, and unless our Government undertakes to inform William, together with von Tirpitz, that they will be held personally responsible for this crime, they are practically condoning it.

This afternoon, the Committee of Nations addressed a collective letter to the —, suggesting that the relations of one of the civilian victims or a common informer should lay an information for murder within the British dominions against the German Emperor, so that a verdict could be obtained to stand against him when the final account comes up for settlement.

*March 31st.*—The psychological peculiarity of the champions in England of forgiveness and of the love of enemies is that they are utterly heartless. They are, moreover, equally thoughtless, for no Protestant clergyman who is a theologian worthy of the name could possibly maintain, as the Reverend Headmaster of a certain school does, that Christianity teaches us to forgive or love *Christ's* enemies, for then we should have to forgive and love the Devil. What this schoolmaster is teaching his pupils to condone in the name of Christ is precisely the devilry of the Germans and their antichristianity. Besides, the time for all these pitiless cranks to make the great gesture of forgiveness with befitting

dignity will be when their babies' hands have been cut off, their wives and daughters raped in their presence by Uhlans, when their fathers and mothers have been deliberately burned to death, and they have been obliged to assist at the execution of their grown-up sons, and then with their own hands to dig the graves and bury the bodies. This has happened to numerous French and Belgian families, whose views as to hating the Germans, or establishing the basis of future reconciliation with them, should prevail over those of the smug British school-master, and of all the British Pecksniffs who would forgive anybody and anything, so long as they can count on a regular supply of lamb and mint-sauce at the normal price, the shrieks of the murdered and outraged victims of German "frightfulness" being sufficiently far off not to interrupt their sermons, or disturb their digestions.

It looks as if one main reason for the objection of the Liberal Government to conscription is that no man who goes to the front and sees what the Germans are, and the extent to which the Liberal Government has misled the country with respect to them, will ever vote "Liberal" again. Here in France the war is believed to have caused an incalculable change in political opinion.

*April 1st.*—There is a leader in one of the English papers on the fact of a naturalised German being employed by the Government to organise the recruiting of the British Army. The British public is apparently still in the primitive phase of mind of inquiring innocently what is the explanation of such mysteries. The only rational explanation is

that some one directly responsible for, or indirectly aiding to engineer, this state of affairs, is in the pay of the German Government. You and I may not have the least idea who this person is, but that is not necessary. It is as easy to see that a country is being betrayed as that a bus is being driven down the road. Then it should be easy for some one on the spot to identify the driver of the bus. But what proof have you that this betrayer of his country's interests is paid? My dear sir, I do not want any proof. When you see a man sweeping somebody else's chimney, and he is not a lunatic, you do not require any proof that he is doing it for money. It is a matter of common sense that he is paid for the job.

General X—— is of the opinion, with which to my infinite regret I am obliged to agree, that the situation seems to be less and less favourable to the ultimate demolishing of German power by the Allies. The interruption to British commerce by the German submarine warfare will become more and more serious as time draws on. Without conscription, and with no sincere effort made to force the selfish English democracy to work to protect itself, a political compromise of some kind will have to be come to. X—— countered this with the American proverb: "Don't swop horses when you're crossing the stream." That is all very well, but if the horse you are on is unable to carry you across, you had better scramble on to the other fellow's if you don't want to drown.

*April 2nd (Good Friday).—*There is a seasonable article to-day in the *Petit Niçois* which well puts

the case against those moral snobs who want to "suck up" to the devilish enemy, and extend Christian love and forgiveness to Moloch. "They drink the water of Lethe with their meals," says this writer wittily. He puts a strong accent on the utter heartlessness of their attitude, which so far from being humane is sadic, and the sadism is of a peculiarly foul and vile kind.

The Press here quotes an interview from an American paper in which Lord Haldane, that champion player of the Royal British game of "Blind-man's Bluff," coolly admits that he all along knew that Germany was planning to attack England, and ruin the British Empire. How he can reconcile this confession with his own policy which brought Britain's powers of resistance to such an aggression to their lowest possible ebb, goodness only knows! Such an interview as this is doing us no good with France. One of the highest personages in the State, the Vice—— of the ——, who is visiting these regions, said to-day that there were only 400,000 British troops at the front, and that neither at the beginning of the war, at the Battle of the Marne, nor now, had the British effort been of the smallest military value. He said that all that the British did at the Battle of the Marne was to look down from a height on the operations, without taking any part in them. Of course this is a gross exaggeration, but it represents what I have always said would be the attitude of a certain class of French politicians. They do not differ "en espèce" from an influential section of our own, and both are doing the work of Germany, which is to sow mutual distrust between the Allies. Here in France

this policy is being directed by the same politicians who before the war were responsible for placing enormous blocks of German industrial shares with French investors.

In the meanwhile, England is lacking in the ammunition she needs to defend herself, and the people, whose trade it is to make it, prefer, according to Mr. George, to get drunk, and are not likely to be dissuaded from doing so by the very politicians whose constant doctrine it has been that the hiccup of the intoxicated artisan—the “vox populi”—is the “vox Dei.” That the French are also in a difficulty, so far at least as ammunition is concerned, is clear from the fact that they do not make the smallest move. The Germans have now been at Soissons, which is a stone's-throw from Paris, for seven months. There is still no means of pushing them back.

*April 3rd.*—General X—— has heard from an English Staff officer here that the plan of the Allies is still to pierce the German lines through Holland, but that France is waiting for England to make the first move. This officer said that Holland had already invited Britain to pass through Dutch territory, but that we had declined.

The S——s, who have just come back from Corsica, said that in Corsica the old landlady of the hotel where they stopped was such a simple old soul that just after the French mobilisation was declared she had lent one of her guests, a German “oberleutenant” named von Beck, 150 francs with which to reach home, and to take arms, of course, against France. She had no idea that she was



helping the enemy. Even after many months of the war she had only a very uncertain idea of what the Russians were about, whether they were with or against the Allies. When the S——s told her that her "Dantzic liqueur" was of "Boche" origin, she instantly threw it all away, and was preparing to treat all her alcohol of foreign origin in the same way, but the S——s were fortunately just in time to save the whisky. She confessed to having suspected for a certain time that the S——s were "Boche" and to have had a long consultation with her cook as to whether it would not be advisable to put some strychnine in their food. They seem to have had a very narrow escape. But hers is the right spirit!

The Italians here are saying that on the authority of the Italian General Staff the intervention of Italy is positively fixed for the 15th. This date is now generally current.

*April 4th.*—Young R——, who is of an age to be acquainted with these matters, says that the Senegalese have committed great ravages among the young girls of Nice, especially those whose ages range from sixteen to twenty, and that an extensive black population will in due course be born. This is one of the silly and libellous tales that naturally proceed in circumstances of the kind from the mouths of babes and sucklings, and of newspaper editors eager for halfpence.

S—— said that Corsica is very "triste," most of the male population having been killed off, for the Corsican is a good soldier and goes ahead. For this reason mourning is very generally worn, and as

it is the custom for the Corsican widow to wear black all her life, the lugubrious effect will be lasting. There are practically no visitors this year to Corsica. S—— saw a number of German prisoners working in the fields; they looked well fed, healthy, and arrogant. A man named Levinstein, who used to cut a great figure on the Riviera and pretended to be a British subject and an enthusiastic Francophile, was discovered, after the war broke out, to be in reality a German. He was arrested, and on him was found a document signed by the German Emperor appointing him to be the eventual governor of Corsica. This story, by the way, is well known here, and there is no doubt as to its truth. But the S——s supply an additional detail which is amusing. Levinstein is now interned as a prisoner, suspected of espionage, in the very island of Corsica which he was to have governed after the war, and is obliged to break stones on the road. He complains bitterly of his blistered hands, and is applying to all his old friends in France to help to rescue him, but so far he has been unsuccessful.

*April 5th.*—The Countess has received news from her son, who is again in the firing-line, this time in the neighbourhood of Beauséjour. He has been accustomed to inform his relatives of where he is stationed by arranging the capital letters in his correspondence to form the name of the place. But this trick has no doubt been detected by the military censor, for his last card was suppressed.

X—— said to-day, commenting on the German-American campaign in the United States, that it

was less dangerous than it looked, for the Anglo-Saxon Americans in the United States were still masters of the capital of the country.

*April 6th.*—C—— has told X——, and his official position as —— at the Ministry of —— gives weight to the information, that all over France there is great enthusiasm for the idea that after the war Albert of Belgium should be made King of the French and the Belgians. Of course if France were again to unite with both Belgium and Holland this would be resuscitating one of Napoleon's most intelligent schemes, but what would England say to it?

There is another curious idea widely entertained by the common folk in France, and that is that after the war everybody in France will be rolling in riches. As a matter of fact, the cost of living has always been higher after great wars than before they broke out, for prices and wages naturally rose during the war time, and could not be reduced afterwards.

*April 7th.*—General X—— still maintains that the Allies have so far achieved practically nothing. "Look at the maps!" he keeps saying. "They haven't really budged!" He is expecting the arrival, on a visit to him at his hotel, of the —— Minister in Rome, who is certain to have much that is interesting to tell him, for they are old cronies.

The letter which the Nice Committee of Nations addressed some days ago to a London paper has been published, doubtless in London, whither it was sent, for it appears to-day in the Paris edition of that paper.

## CHAPTER X

*Shocking condition of wounded in Nice : Lyons hospitals full : Opinion of Diplomatic Corps in Rome : Monte Carlo hopeful : Swindling British officers in Nice : Joan of Arc and the "aids" : Niggardly "Department of Flowers" : At Les Eparges : French writers and comedians : How General Gallieni saved Paris : Lassoing in the war : The sugar problem : Another winter campaign : A "woman's reason"*

April 12th.—General X—— this afternoon told me of the pain that he experienced on seeing the wounded arrive this afternoon at the Hôtel Ruhl. They were literally caked with mud, from which the blood was oozing. The spectacle, he said, made the tears run down his cheeks. What shocked him most was that none of the numerous soldiers who were loitering round in uniform offered a helping hand, and no one would have been present to carry the stretchers from the ambulance tramcars into the hotel if the public, including his chauffeur, had not rushed forward to do so. He thinks that it is specially outrageous that the French wounded should be neglected in this fashion, when Nice is invaded by British officers driving about in motor cars painted with the red cross, and accompanied in almost every case by ladies. Those officers have

no doubt done their duty, and their presence in Nice is explicable upon medical grounds, but the contrast between the merry life they are publicly leading and the condition of these poor French soldiers, for whom no motor-cars are in readiness to transfer them from the station to the hospital, who are taken there piled up in tramcars by a circuitous route, is, in my American friend's opinion, a little scandalous.

The conviction that Italy must join the Allies at no distant date is becoming more and more general.

*April 13th.*—The Countess came round this morning. She was in some distress because she had heard nothing from her son, who is now at Beauséjour, where there has been some very severe fighting, the German attacks having been beaten off, with ground gained by the French, but of course with very severe losses. The Countess wept. She too had been unnerved by meeting the same convoys of wounded yesterday in the streets of Nice, in the dreadful condition described to me by General X—. She told me that the reason why these wounded were being sent straight to Nice, without apparently having received anything but the most summary "first aid," and notwithstanding that Nice was so far from the fighting-line, was due to the fact that all the other hospitals in France were chock-full. At Lyons, for instance, where she has relations, she has been told that there is no more room at all in the hospitals, while in Nice, of course, on account of the numerous empty hotels, there is still plenty of accommodation. She came back to lunch, and seemed a little brighter in spirits. A

friend of hers had received a letter from his son, who said that the German defence on the Western front is weakening all along the line. The French soldiers are more and more conscious of this every day. One of the reasons that explains it is that hitherto the Germans have lived on the countries that they have invaded and occupied, but this resource is exhausted, and they are now dependent on food-supplies from home, which can only be brought up with great difficulty and irregularity, and are frequently destroyed on the way by aeroplanes. Consequently the German soldier is half starved.

The —— Minister in Rome, who arrived in Nice yesterday as General X——'s guest, told him that in his private opinion Italy would not move, because she has not enough money, her finances having been exhausted by her Tripoli expedition. At Rome all the Diplomatic Corps—with the exception of the Germans, of course—are convinced that in the end the Allies will win. Von Bülow is very unpopular there, cold-shouldered by the other diplomatists, and whether Italy goes to war or not he will be forced by Italian public opinion to sell his property in Italy and definitely quit the country.

Referring again to the scene of the arrival of the French wounded at the Hôtel Ruhl, X—— said that people were taking off their hats to the wounded as they passed by, but he thought it a most tactless thing to do, for this is customary at the passage of funerals, and must have produced a most lugubrious effect upon the shattered men on the stretchers. He thinks it very foolish to utilise the big hotels in Nice

as hospitals. Getting the wounded upstairs in the hotel lifts causes them unnecessary suffering, and another drawback is the distance of the kitchens from the wards. The authorities, now that the stress of the first emergency is long past, should have built large one-storied buildings as temporary hospitals. There is much common sense in what X—— says.

*April 14th.*—De B—— has heard from Camille Blanc at Monte Carlo that according to information which has reached him there is so little doubt that the war will soon be over that he is making preparations for a summer season at the Casino to try to make up for the ruined winter season.

G——, whom I met with his wife in the afternoon, commenting on the approaching closing of St. Mary's Convalescent Home here, said it was disgraceful the way in which the English officers had been overcharged and swindled by the tradespeople of Nice. The illicit profits that have been made out of these interesting guests no doubt explains the frantic anxiety of the Nice Municipal Council that the Home should again be opened soon. They had even sent a deputation to the British authorities begging them not to close the Home, but had to be satisfied with an assurance that it would be started anew in the autumn. G—— related that his American friend W——, who had entertained some British officers at the Eldorado, paid their cabman for them at their own request, in advance, to prevent a dispute, and gave him 1 franc 50 centimes as a tip. The porter of the Eldorado had the impudence to reproach W—— with this on the

ground that he was hindering an honest Niçois from making his due profits. W—— complained of the man's insolence to the manager of the music-hall.

The —— Minister has told X—— that in his opinion the war will not be over for at least two years, and we may think ourselves lucky if it be over in three.

De B—— who, like most anticlericals, is superstitious, has made the acquaintance of a clairvoyante here, whose husband has been recently killed at the front. She declares that she holds frequent conversations with his spirit, and that, according to him, there are a great number of spirits at work on the battle-field (what the spiritualists call "aids"). They are busily engaged in protecting certain lives, by warding off bullets, and so forth, and are under the direction of Joan of Arc.

It may be noted that the relative indifference that is felt for the huge loss of life in the war is ascribable to the fact that, as death comes inevitably to all sooner or later, war does not really alter a state of things, which is immutable, as catastrophically or tragically as might be expected. It simply "speeds it up," to use a horrible expression dear to the modern newspaper. The death motor moves, as it were, with an enormously increased number of revolutions to the second. Some Frenchman has defined life as a "course à la mort"—a race for death—and in this rush the war is merely establishing a new record for pace.

*April 15th.*—De B——, to whom I related what G—— had said about the mercenary attitude of the Nice tradesfolk towards the wounded British officers,



says that he has heard from Paris that there is a very bitter feeling there against Nice, which is accused of not having borne its due share of the burden of the day. And in the same spirit of criticism the Nice paper, the *Eclaireur*, publishes this morning a brief article calling attention to the fact that while the other Departments of France have, through their Councils General, voted sums of money for the relief of the "départements envahis" (the departments occupied by the enemy), the Council General of the Alpes-Maritimes, in which is situated Nice, has contented itself with a display of "flowers of eloquence," perhaps to keep up the reputation of the region as the "Département des Fleurs."

The Countess is happy again, for she has received a letter from her son Roger, who describes one or two minor engagements he has been present at in the Argonne. "On leur a passé la piquette!" he says, referring to the enemy. Poor lad! This was the Lyonese expression that he used in the first letter he wrote to his mother at the beginning of the war, when he asked her consent to his enlisting as a volunteer: "On va leur passer la piquette!" So at least one of his ambitions has been achieved.

*April 16th.*—The French have paid very heavily for their victory at Les Eparges. M——'s brother was there, and has written a vivid description of it in a letter which arrived this morning. The mud, he says, was inconceivable, and whole sections of men disappeared bodily in it, and of course there was no hope of saving the wounded engulfed in this awful sea of mud.

*April 18th.*—The price of the Bresse fowl has gone up at the market to 6 francs a kilo, and provisions generally are dearer, but it is expected that there will be a fall at the end of the month.

Madame O——, my landlady, who lunched yesterday with a soldier who has now twice been invalided from the front, was told by him that in the opinion of the army no decisive victory could be claimed against the Germans so far. He said that while in his company there were twenty-five resolute men like himself (he was decorated with the Legion of Honour on the field of battle), who were willing to go anywhere, there were at least 75 per cent. of the regiment that required to be kicked forward. He confirmed what I have already learned from other sources about the terrible mud, which was the most desperate obstacle at the battle of Les Eparges. One of the saddest features of the fighting, he explained, was the necessity one was often under of giving an order to some subordinate which one knew to be tantamount to a sentence of certain and instant death. He described such a scene which had painfully affected him; the young sergeant to whom he gave it, the lad's hesitation, then the peremptory command, and the death-stroke which came almost immediately afterwards, a bullet through the lungs.

I glanced last night at the Easter number of the *Annales Politiques et Littéraires*, and was surprised at the persistent vanity with which a little gang of French writers continues to preach the old ignorant doctrine of the superiority of the French intellect over all others. It is this monkey-like mania for perpetually grinning at oneself in the looking-glass,

and thereby turning one's back on the real world behind one, which has done France so much harm in the past. It is not all Frenchmen by any means who suffer from this weakness, but enough of them do to exercise a certain influence on public opinion, and, with it, public events. One may be sure that the gallant Frenchmen who are fighting their country's battles at the front are not preening themselves with the thought that the entire civilisation of Europe is chiefly due to "French writers *and comedians*" as the duffer in the *Annales* maintains. They have something else to do, which they are doing so much better.

*April 21st.*—Admiral M——, whom I met this afternoon, spoke to me of the go-ahead personality of General Gallieni. It was Gallieni who had insisted that Caillaux should be sent out of the country, and he got his way, for Caillaux had been endeavouring to stir up trouble in Paris among the working population. The General had told Admiral M—— that when he took over the government and defence of Paris he discovered that his predecessor, General Michel, had failed to prepare a single one of the forts of Paris for defence, and they were not even linked up with one another by telephonic communication. He had recently sent the Admiral a large chromolithograph in three colours, which represented him (it was shown to me) in full general's uniform, and with a high complexion, protecting with his sword an allegorical figure of Paris. He had appended his autograph to it. The Admiral thinks that he is doing all he knows "to bombard himself a marshal." But his

tactics remind me somewhat of those of my old friend, the late General Boulanger. Even the post cards that he sends to his friends bear his coloured portrait, as did Boulanger's, if I remember rightly.

*April 22nd.*—General X—— told the curious story of Commandant Poireau's son, who came back from Mexico, where he was a cowboy, to volunteer in the French army as soon as the war broke out. The French commander of the brigade to which he was attached wanted to take a certain town occupied by the Germans without bombarding it, but all his attempts to surprise the enemy were baulked by three watchful German sentinels. Then young Poireau came to the rescue, and lassoed the sentinels one after the other so cleverly that they were unable to give the alarm. By the time they had been dragged to the French trenches they were already strangled by the lasso. The French then took the town by a surprise assault, with fearful slaughter. Young Poireau was rewarded for his cleverness and daring with a lieutenancy and the Cross of the Legion of Honour. General X—— still thinks that the war will last for some time, for a year at least, and this is also the opinion of Commandant Poireau, who speaks with some authority owing to the very prominent position he holds in connection with French railways.

*April 23rd.*—The French, who have the far more terrible problem to face of the natural children born to the unfortunate women who have been misused by the German Beast, are a little disgusted at the prurient publicity which is being given in one

of London's halfpenny papers to the question of what it is pleased to call "War Babies." My American friend F——, with the keen and humorous common sense which is still so characteristic of the Yankee, remarked to-day in this connection with an air of deep reflectiveness: "' War Babies ! ' It's odd how some of you English people still persist in dropping the h ! "

*April 25th.*—During the last few days there has been a great rise in the price of sugar. X——, who is the greatest living authority on sugar—he even has diabetes—and owns a unique library of 15,000 works on sugar, the largest in existence, explained that this rise is merely due to the non-arrival as yet of Cuban cane-sugar, which is always a month later on the market than European sugar. Of course the shortage for the time being is due to the beet-sugar factories in the North of France having been destroyed, but Cuba can produce enough cane-sugar to supply the world. X—— continues to take a pessimistic view of the military outlook, and bases his opinion on the maps, which show, in spite of the daily reports of French successes and advances, that the Allies have not really made any material move forward.

*April 28th.*—Took a long motor-car drive with X——. The country-side is now ablaze with wild double roses of many colours, but even this lovely sight could not combat the deep feeling of melancholy which overwhelmed me, intensified by the depressing news from the West, which X—— thinks is very serious. I am getting more and more

anxious at receiving no news from D—— for so long.

*April 29th.*—The *Eclaireur* quotes a curious passage from the *Times* about the existence of good relations between the French and British troops, “in spite of indiscreet stories to the contrary.” These relations are described as “good enough.” It stands to reason, of course, that the awful life in the trenches cannot be conducive to a display of mutual good humour among troops who have so little in common.

X——’s chauffeur has told him that his soldier friends who have returned from the front declare that they will never go through another winter campaign in the trenches. It is worse than death. So X—— opines that, if the war should last over a year, there will be a revolution in France. I disagree with him entirely. I think he underestimates the powers of endurance of the average Frenchman, and his love of fighting, and is led astray by the rebellious talk all Frenchmen are given to, but which is all “*en l’air*.” A Frenchman is always ready to convince you that there is no authority in Heaven or Earth for which he has the slightest respect, or any intention of obeying, while in reality he is the most law-abiding, devoted creature on earth, and certainly there is no soldier in the world who can stand so much discomfort and hardship with such cheerful indifference. But in the commercial class, especially among the refugees, there is no doubt growing up an intense anxiety that the war should come to an end soon, for many of these people are living on their capital

and foresee at no distant date the complete exhaustion of their funds. There is a fat man, who sits next to us nightly at the R——, whose business, a large clothing establishment called "La Belle Jardinière" at Toul, has been completely ruined. He is living, and comfortably for the time being, on his private funds, and in addition supports a friend who has lost everything. By the way, it was his wife who told me that she would prefer to know that her son at the front, from whom she has had no news, was dead rather than endure the racking suspense of not knowing where he is. A little unmotherly this seemed to me, but quite "a woman's reason."

## CHAPTER XI

*Mobocracy is muck : What retards the French equipment : Diary of a young Lorraine girl : "Turpinite" a failure : Italy's reported adhesion to the Entente : "Froussards" : Can the Allies drive the Germans out ? : Americans in difficulties : Lilies of the valley : French "culture" : The "Lusitania" crime : How to deal with the German Imperial family : An American view*

*April 30th.*—There is to-day a lull in the situation, no enlightening information coming from anywhere, so far as the military operations are concerned. But George's speech on the effect of drink on the activity of the British mechanics and the mischief it is causing to the defence of the realm is terrible reading. These are the people to whom the Liberal party, and chief among them George himself, have committed the fate of the Empire. Truly England is the land of moral and intellectual contradictions. To set against this conscienceless multitude are the splendid soldiers and sailors, their fellow-countrymen, who are risking and losing their lives to protect the hearths and homes of those others, who lift a little finger, it is true, but not to help or save them. G. N——, who is an arm-chair-and-three-meals-a-day Socialist, violently protested to-day when I maintained that all mobocracy, which



is roughly democracy, is muck. "Muck!" he exclaimed; "on the contrary it is the beautiful flower to which the manure, which you call muck, gives birth." He deliberately confuses the flower with the manure. Genius, too, we are told, springs from the soil, but it never stops there. It is ever careful to spring away from it.

*May 2nd.*—Des G—— explained to-day one of the causes which has helped to retard the furnishing of equipment to the French army. Red-tape, with perhaps a little financial underhand dealing, is to blame. The French or foreign manufacturer, on signing his contract with the Government, has to deposit 5 per cent. of the value of the order. The Government, for instance, wants immediately 1,000,000 metres of cloth for uniforms. The price paid being 9 francs a metre, this represents a 9,000,000 francs order. The deposit is 450,000 francs. This money the manufacturer generally finds himself obliged to borrow, his own capital being insufficient, or locked up in his business. The consequence is that the Ministry of War is at present invaded by money-lenders' and bankers' touts, who offer to lend this money at rates varying from 25 to 30 per cent. Then there is the middle man, who has arranged the contract—the Government for some mysterious reason refusing or being unable to deal direct with the manufacturer—and he expects at least 15 per cent. for his trouble; so that in the long run the manufacturer is unable to deliver the goods with any profit to himself.

*May 3rd.*—My landlady showed me to-day a

diary kept by a young Lorraine girl, now a refugee in Nice, of her experiences of the German invasion. "Ah, cursed men," she exclaims, "may God punish you for your temerity!" And she describes how the German soldiers pillaged everything in the houses and the shops of her native village, even searching the cellars and the flower-beds in the gardens. They turned the church inside out, overturning the statues of the saints, and scattering the candles, the flowers, and the sacerdotal vestments pell-mell on the floor. At this spectacle, she says, "grief and anger choking me, I fell on my knees and wept, but what was the use of giving way to grief that would be unworthy of a French girl of Lorraine." Shortly afterwards a Bavarian regiment arrived, and Maria Guyet, which is this little girl's name, at the risk of her own life, rushed through a storm of bullets and saved her younger sister, Claire, from a neighbouring tobacco shop which was being fired on. They hid in a cellar, and learned that a neighbour of theirs had been shot in the arm by a German officer while she was handing him a glass of water; the brute was indignant because she had not given him wine. Through the airholes in the cellar they watched the burning of the village. The exploding stones made as much noise as the firing of cannon, and they had the agonising illusion that it was the house over their heads that was burning. During the night they heard shrieking, and this was found to have come from neighbours, Mme. Martin and her daughters, whose husband and father had been shot before their eyes. His body lay in the staircase of his house covered with blood. In the church square was the

body of a man with his chest pierced with bullet wounds. His wife had tried to smuggle him away by dressing him up as a woman, but his moustache betraying him, the Germans pulled off his feminine attire and shot him on the spot. French troops arrived the next day and there was an engagement, with a bombardment of the village, in which Maria was wounded in the hand. The French retired, and then a German officer, on the false pretext that his troops had been fired at, seized Maria's "papa," together with an old man of seventy, and had them both shot. When her father understood that there was no hope for him, he turned pale, and without a word of good-bye to his wife and children fell to the ground, clutching his hand to his heart: "A hundred bullets had stretched him dead." Maria's mother was thus left a widow with seven children, and no means of livelihood. Their cottage had already been burned with all it contained, and they had to step over the father's body to gather together the bundle of things they had been trying to escape with. Some of the Germans, touched by their grief, offered them bottles of wine, and they were too frightened to refuse them (though it went against the grain). Maria's seventeen-year-old brother was taken away by the Germans, and it was not till long afterwards that his relations heard from him that he was at Cracow. She and the rest of the family succeeded in escaping to Geneva, whence they were sent to the French frontier. Maria was so pleased at the prospect of seeing "red trousers" again that she resolved to kiss the first French soldier that she met, and did so, somewhat to the soldier's astonishment, but his gratification on

learning the reason was great. She concludes her diary with the following words: "And may that race of Germans which I hate be for ever wiped out, and may France, aggrandised, become the sovereign queen, and may she survive to proclaim in the future centuries the glory of her valiant children!"

*May 4th.*—Des G—— has learned from officer friends that the much-talked-of and vaunted "turpinite" is practically a failure. Its use quickly ruins the gun, and the handling of it is dangerous to both the maker and the gunner.

N——, whom I met this afternoon, is certain, on the strength of information which reaches him, he says, straight from the French Foreign Office, that an arrangement was signed in London on the 25th inst. at five o'clock, by which Italy joins the Allies. Later in the day I heard the same statement repeated, and it now seems to be generally current and accepted here. Our Italian Delegate, the Marquis de F——, however, does not believe it. He thinks that the negotiations with Italy are being hindered by the pretensions of the Panславists in Russia, who, in order to save the susceptibilities of Serbia, will not accord to Italy sufficient of the coast of Dalmatia to make it worth her while to go to war.

Madame N——, by the way, still holds that England is not making as complete a military effort as she ought to, or that can be compared with the French. In spite of my arguments, she refuses to admit that our fleet's effort is worth the French army's, and I am forced to agree with her that from the military point of view our Government is

not doing its best. I can but repeat the explanation which I have so often given to my friends in this country, that the average Radical politician in England is either a drivelling or a conscienceless ninny, and that when a Ministry is mainly composed of these two elements you must expect things to happen just exactly as they have happened, and there is no use expressing any vast astonishment about it.

At the American Hospital, one of the patients, a young Frenchman from Northern France, whose foot had been clean cut off by a shell, gave me some vivid details of the fighting from its psychological aspect. He said that among the older officers, those of the past generation, there was a considerable proportion of "froussards," or "funkers," but very few among the younger officers. It is an understood thing that the men refuse to move unless their officer goes ahead and leads them. This accounts for the high percentage of slain among the French officers as compared with the German, for though the German officer's courage is willingly recognised by both the French and the English, he exposes himself as little as possible, and the discipline of the German soldier is so strenuous that he dares not revolt against this inequality. This French soldier was disposed to think that the Germans are not so brutal as is generally declared, for he said that when the dead between the trenches became too numerous, they willingly agreed, as a rule, to an armistice for the purpose of burying the bodies. Also exchanges of presents, generally of cigars and cigarettes, between the combatants in the opposing trenches were frequent. There can be no doubt

that the stories of German atrocities have affected the civilian inhabitants of cities far more than the French soldiers of peasant stock, who have a natural tendency to be callous where suffering and death are concerned. The ease with which they seem disposed to fraternise with the Germans is a point to be noted. It explains in some measure the success with which the pacific penetration of Northern France, which was rapidly approaching the dimensions of a commercial and industrial conquest, was carried out by the Germans before the war. This same soldier told me that he felt no pain when his foot was torn off, and even limped after it to pick it up. A blow from a splinter of shell which wounded him in the side also gave him no pain, though it knocked him down, and it was not until he tried to rise that he knew he had been wounded. In his opinion it would be very difficult for the Allies to drive the Germans out of French and Belgian territory, for owing to the extreme deliberation of General Joffre they had been allowed to fortify themselves too strongly in their positions.

F——, who has taken the place of General X——, our American Delegate, gave an amusing account this morning of the difficulties which the Americans are encountering in Nice over their passports, without which they cannot be granted the necessary permit to move about in the neighbourhood, or leave for some other destination. Only the American Embassy in Paris, and no longer the consuls, can issue these passports, the reason for this being that numerous German spies are furnished with them, a batch having been stolen just after the outbreak of the war by the Berlin Foreign

Office, to whom they had been submitted by the American Embassy there for countersignature. A certificate of birth is now demanded by the American Embassy in Paris before it will issue a passport, but forty years ago there was no official or obligatory registration of births in the United States. So this certificate cannot be produced by the older generation of Americans here, with the result that they are practically prisoners. The American Consul takes the fees in advance, and does his best to persuade his compatriots that their passports are on the way, and are certain to arrive sooner or later. But his position is daily becoming more and more difficult. His most awkward moments are when old American ladies arrive at his office, "sour as lemons" and "prompt to get brittle." The strain is having a serious effect upon his health and spirits.

A letter from the front arrived to-day from Comte J. de B——, in which he says: "Since a fortnight past I have returned to the trenches. One is much better off there now than in winter, for now the sun shines, and in the second line one can stretch oneself out on the grass and pick lilies of the valley."

*May 6th.*—The Countess has received a letter from her son at the front, who says that the weather there is beginning to get warm, and bad odours are becoming troublesome.

In an English and a French paper which I read to-day there are two articles which struck me as being representative of two phases of English and French foolishness respectively. The English writer, after describing the Germans as cowards and rascals,

proceeds to write of them as being "as fine fellows as the world could wish to house." This is in accord with the mania that some English people seem to have for forcing themselves to adopt at one and the same time contradictory points of view, or it may be due to a clumsy effort to show broad-mindedness, or to a circumspect ambition to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, or just to the newspaper proprietor's instinct to fill his hat with the halfpence of everybody in the crowd. The other, the French phase, is developed by M. Maurice Barrès. He insists that France after the war must impose her "culture" on the Germanic races. That, of course, is just the accursed thing. If it had not been for the age-long competition between the two "cultures," French and German, and their vain and arrogant champions, this war might never have broken out, for its first causes are traceable back to Napoleon, and the Imperial attempt to impose French "culture" on the rest of Europe. England, it must be granted to her credit, has no idea, and never had, of imposing her "culture" on any of her European neighbours, whatever faults of the kind she may have committed, in common with all the other Christian nations, in the East and in Africa. But she has had to pay, and is still paying, a terrible bill of costs for her unsought-for share in this sanguinary squabble between the French and German "cultures."

*May 8th.*—A couple of lines in the papers this morning announced the sinking by a German submarine of the *Lusitania*. At a very early hour I found old S——, the German Jew with the American



accent and perhaps (?) nationality, grumbling in the "salle de dépêches" of the *Petit Niçois* at the absence of detailed news about this new crime. He complained that, as it had been perpetrated a little past two o'clock yesterday afternoon, there was no excuse for the papers here being unable to state at least whether or not the passengers and the crew had been saved. The *Petit Marseillais*, which he had bought this morning, had no mention of the event at all. He had always understood that the *Lusitania* was unattackable, or was supposed by its owners to be unattackable, on account of its speed, so he presumed that some traitors on board must have signalled to the enemy when the boat was about to slow down to take on a pilot. S—— makes no disguise of his belief that the Germans will ultimately win the war, for he considers them to have an overwhelming superiority in the matter of organisation, equipment, and generalship over the Allies. He also thinks that the German soldier is more courageous than either the French or the English, but as he has nothing to put forward in proof of this belief it is clearly a prejudice. What evidently worries him is that in this country, at any rate (he is a money-lender, after having been a dealer in spectacles), "business is *not* as usual."

The Committee of Nations found no sufficing words in which to express its indignation over the *Lusitania* outrage. De B—— was pleased to have at last met an Englishman—some local business man—who said that the gallows for the German Emperor could alone atone for such a crime. Our Spanish Delegate noted with intense satisfaction

that the view originally propounded by us in a letter to a London paper, that the German Emperor should be held personally responsible and legally condemned for murder in accordance with the criminal law of England, is at last making way with English people. It is certainly not too soon. He thought, however, and the other members of the Committee unanimously agreed, that hanging was much too good for Emperor William. One of us suggested that as the Germans were waging war with such a self-complacent display of scientific knowledge, it would be a good plan to make the German Emperor and his entire family disappear chemically—not to asphyxiate them with chlorine, for that would be too commonplace an imitation of their dishonourable methods of warfare, but convert them into glue, and dispose of them to the wholesale trade, the centre of which is in neutral Holland. To go in at one end of the apparatus as the Imperial German family and come out at the other end as useful glue, which would serve to stick the story of their misdeeds into albums for the instruction of children, would be a form of punishment appealing strongly to the German scientific imagination. De B——'s suggestion also met with favour. It was to hang all the Imperial culprits with a drop set in motion by an electric button, to be touched at the supreme moment by a little Belgian orphan girl, whose parents had been murdered in cold blood, and whose hands had been cut off by order of German officers. She would use the mutilated stump of her arm for the purpose.

An intelligent young American, who has been

stopping here with his sister, is leaving with her to-morrow to return to the United States, for she is so convinced that the Germans will win that she is afraid to stop any longer in Europe. Her brother does not share in this view, but he says that the reason why the United States have not yet declared themselves in favour of the Allies is not so much the influence of the German-Americans as this same fear that Germany may turn out to be the winner. He calculates that Bernstorff and Dernburg have at least 10,000 men in America working for them to influence public opinion in favour of Germany, and to keep them supplied with inside information. He has no doubt, for instance, that all details of the *Lusitania's* movements and the nature of its cargo which could have been of service to the German Admiralty were communicated to it by American customs officials in German pay. But he maintains that the general feeling in the United States is in favour of the Allies. Before he left America in September last he was constantly seeing fights in the streets between the sympathisers with the different sides, and this, he has been told, has since become much more frequent.

The *Eclaireur* of Nice gives prominence to a speech just delivered by Mr. George, in which he says: "I am often asked how long the war will last. I can only reply in the words of Abraham Lincoln, 'It will end when the object has been attained.' I hope that it will not end until that moment comes." The first part of this speech is just what the French have been longing to hear from the mouth of a responsible British statesman,

but the "hope" that comes in at the tail of the sentence takes all the guilt off the gingerbread. Is this "hope," they ask, the thin end of the wedge of a British policy for making terms with Germany before she has been punished for her misdeeds, and definitely prevented from recommencing them? It is a pity that the Celtic temperament so rarely lends itself to frank affirmation.

## CHAPTER XII

*Liberal Press on the "Lusitania" crime : Hysterical old female : "La voie ordinaire" : Letter from the front : Victory near Arras : A verdict of murder against the German Emperor : Churchill on trade : News of death of P. D—— : His career—a great artist : "Action Française" on his loss : Germans in England : Next Day Story : Lord Armstrong on sentiment : French mayor a traitor : Narrow escape of the Crown Prince : Treason and bad government*

May 11th.—The London Liberal papers on the destruction of the *Lusitania* make sad reading. The theory which the Committee of Nations here was the first to make public in the English Press that the German Emperor must be made personally responsible for the crimes committed by his order is now put forth by the *Daily News*, which says "there must be no head too high to fall for this offence." One can see the writer of this timidly and anonymously expressed suggestion growing pale over his own daring, and trusting that it will not catch the eye of any but the least Germanophile of the censors. The *Daily Chronicle* says cheerfully : "A more drastic surgery will be needed for the cancer of German militarism than any wise prophet could have predicted last August ; for even our Prussophobes had not then any conception

of the extent to which that cancer had grown." The cancer of the "Boche" Press and of the "Boche" statesmanship which has grown in England is far more in need of drastic surgery. This outcry of the *Daily Chronicle* suggests some hysterical old female who has unwillingly taken a sea-bath for the first time. She comes up panting, but smiling, and exclaims: "Oh, how very, very *salt*! I am quite sure that even our most experienced sailors have no idea that the sea is as salt as that!"

To judge from questions asked in the House of Commons, and Churchill's reply to them, the Admiralty imposed a certain track upon the *Lusitania*. What that was seems to have promptly come to the knowledge of the Germans—presumably by what used to be called in the Dreyfus case "*la voie ordinaire*."

I have to-day a letter from L. W——, in which he says: "Having finished our task at Les Eparges, and being in need of rest, we left for the Eastern front, and now, after having had a good rest, we are at present in the North at 3 kilometres from Arras, and 1100 metres from the Boches. We are preparing to do as we did at Les Eparges, and I have no doubt that we shall succeed. You will be able to judge from the official 'communiqués' we are working hard, and the time to write to you I take from my sleep. It is now nearly three weeks since I have washed my face. Here we are in a village devastated by the Boches, at Auzun-St.-Aubin. We lack food. . . . My health is perfect, and I often pray God for you that He will preserve you for a long time to my affection. I conclude with the promise to you to do my duty right to

the end, and in the belief that the victory of the Allies is approaching. . . .”

To-day the French papers are jubilant over the success of the French attacks in the neighbourhood of Arras, where they have taken 3000 prisoners, 10 guns, and 50 mitrailleuses, and have advanced in certain regions over 4 kilometres. This no doubt is the engagement to which L—— was looking forward in his letter, and in which he must have since participated.

I wrote to-day to P. D——. I am filled with anxiety about him owing to his long silence.

*May 12th.*—The letter from the Committee of Nations here, which a London paper published, recommending that juries should, notwithstanding the coroner's advice, bring in a verdict of murder against the responsible heads of the German Government when this crime is committed by German submarines in British waters, has no doubt had its desired effect in the case of the *Lusitania*. The verdict of murder, rendered at the inquest, in spite of the coroner, inculcates the German Emperor as well as the officers of the felon German boat. The members of the Committee of International Safety are not unanimously disposed to look upon this result as the direct outcome of their letter, but they fail to take into account the peculiar sheepish trait in the characters of middle-class Englishmen which makes them unwilling to move unless they are given a lead, but very willing to follow almost any lead when once it is given.

The Americans here are expressing great indignation against the British Admiralty for having done

nothing effectual to protect the *Lusitania* on its arrival in British waters. Little by little, my predictions as to what would happen with the British Admiralty, constituted as it now is, are coming true. The vulgarity of Churchill's mental attitude towards the catastrophe almost surpasses belief. Fancy saying that "the shocking exception of the *Lusitania* should not divert the attention of the House of Commons and the country from the fact that their *entire seaboard* trade had been carried on without any appreciable loss." At a moment like this, with the whole civilised world plunged into horror and grief by one of the most abominable crimes in history, the British Navy Minister begs the British nation not to allow this trifle to divert their attention from the satisfactory state of *trade* !

The letter which I wrote yesterday to P. D—— is already answered. This evening G. N—— came into the —— and showed me a cutting from the *Action Française*, which gives me an account of D——'s death—killed at the front. I do not habitually read the *Action Française*, and it is some time since G. N—— and I have met, so that these and other coincidences combined made me feel as if he were the unconscious bearer of a message direct from the spirit world.

I thus lose the friend whom, among all my dear French friends, I held perhaps dearest of all. With none other was the intellectual and emotional sympathy quite so deep. G. N——, who seemed to have divined how profound was my friendship for D——, announced the grievous news with as much tact and delicacy as if it had concerned a brother, and indeed D—— had been to me almost as much



as was my late brother, whom he resembled in many ways, even physically, but in the extreme sensitiveness of his artistic perception more than anything. A pure, genial soul—genial too in the French sense of genius—was P. D——, and so gay and brave and loyal and delicate in all his thoughts and actions, with an infinite sense of humour, a huge love of fun, yet at bottom sad. “J’ai le pressentiment que je ne ferai pas de vieux os, mon vieux S——” was what he frequently said to me before the war. “But what’s going to kill you?” I would inquire. “Je mourrai d’une balle,” he would answer gaily; “c’est sûr; c’est ma destinée.” And his destiny has been fulfilled. Yet I do not feel revengeful for his death, as I have felt for certain others. It was the one that he preferred, and in a measure sought, and by making it splendid it gives the artistic finish to his life, thus completing its line with the same faultless and unfailing sense of beauty that characterised his own drawings. For P. D——, who was a great artist, drew as only the Chinese draw, with the unending line which never falters, which is one whole and undivided articulate presentment of a mental conception by means of values in black and white, the synthetic *countenance* of a complete and always beautiful vision. The accident of his birth at Hong-Kong may have accounted for his possession of this faculty, for which, among modern European artists, he was unique. With the Chinese mastery of line he had also the Chinese humour of line, which is so grave, urbane, and profound.

And his Christian piety was absolute; he was a sincere and simple believer, with that generosity of

conviction and noble yielding up of all claims on cheap reasonableness, fatal to the true spirit of faith, which is typical of the Frenchman when he definitely ranges himself beneath the banner of religion. Nor was there the slightest leaven of bigotry or superstition in his belief, indeed, a keener or more penetrative intellect than his I have rarely come in contact with, and there was no finer sailor in the French navy. To Art his loss is irreparable.

The *Action Française* writes about him: "Naval Lieutenant Pierre Dupouey, captain of the 1st Regiment of Marine Fusiliers, met a glorious death near Nieuport in the night of the 3rd to the 4th of April. On the outbreak of war he was on board the *République*. During the tragic hours that followed the retreat from Charleroi he wished, in an admirable movement of faith and patriotism, to sacrifice himself more completely to his country, and sought service on land. His wish was granted. On the 1st of November, after a few hours passed at Toulon with his wife and infant child, he took the command of one of those companies of Marine Fusiliers who have so heroically defended the line of the Yser. It is after five months of rude fatigues and terrible fights that death, which he accepted with a joyous heart, came to strike him down in the full expansion of his physical and intellectual capacities. His glorious remains repose in the little cemetery which surrounds the church of Coxyde, after a funeral, which, said the regimental chaplain, 'was the most touching and the most moving which has been seen during this war.' . . . A man of action, he lived, below the surface, a life of very great interior depth."

Dupouey, I may add, had a knowledge of English art and literature which I have never found in any other Frenchmen. For instance, his study of Rossetti won a first prize awarded by the French Ministry of Marine in connection with interpreter studentships in the French navy, and oddly enough was printed for this reason in the official *Journal de la Marine Française*, one number of which it completely filled. It was the profoundest and most appreciative study of the great Anglo-Italian painter that has yet been published in France, or indeed anywhere else.

*May 13th.*—I wish English people could have an opportunity of appreciating the indignation and contempt roused amongst the French when they read in the papers that the demonstration against Germans in London, excited by the sinking of the *Lusitania*, has revealed the presence in our capital of no fewer than 400 German butchers who have been calmly allowed to continue their business there as usual. "It's rather a hopeless fight we're putting up," is the burden of their comments, "if the English still persist in considering their stomachs and their trade interests before everything else." The only excuse I can offer in the hope of calming them is that the fault is not so much that of the British people as of the Government of pro-German anarchists, international financiers, and pettifogging lawyers we are cursed with in England, who are anything you like except English, and in the manner of the "Arabian Nights" I told them the following

## NEXT DAY STORY

There was a German Jew who was a Beggar, and they put him on Horseback and he promptly rode to the Devil.

## THE NEXT DAY

the German Jew became a naturalised citizen of Hell, where he is now a popular member of the Government.

Nothing is more characteristic of the odd, not to say insane, belief of many representative English people that this war can be waged with kid gloves than Lord Armstrong's suggestion in the London Press to-day that while the English should oppose gas to gas against the Germans, it should be "gas which will cause no ultimate serious effect." The comic thing about this is that Lord Armstrong's name is associated with the manufacture of the most ruthlessly murderous engines of war that are known to the world. He does not, being a business man, suggest that we should use pop-guns and pea-shooters instead of the Armstrong artillery, which would also produce "no ultimate serious effect." Lord Armstrong adds: "The time has come when we must stifle sentiment." I wish he could hear the unstifled laughter which his letter has roused from the French here who have had cognisance of it. One of them said to me to-day: "You English are reaching the stage where the Chinese were some generations ago, when they made war by pulling faces, putting on hideous masks, and beating tomtoms: these also 'caused no ultimate serious effect.'"

*May 14th.*—Madame O—— visits the refugees, and has been told by one of them who has property at Montfaucon, that the mayor of a neighbouring commune proved himself to be a traitor. He set fire to a house in his own village as a signal to the Germans when they were approaching, and afterwards entertained the Crown Prince with the utmost hospitality at the Mairie. Then, when the French were on the point of re-entering the village, it was this mayor who arranged the escape of the Crown Prince, who would otherwise have been captured. His guilt having been proved, the mayor was shot.

Madame O—— admitted that she would have had difficulty in believing this story if it had not been confirmed by a soldier she met afterwards, who has just returned from the Argonne for the second time, after having been wounded twice. He declares that the attitude of the peasantry in Lorraine was strangely hostile to the French soldiers. It was quite common to hear them say that they would sooner live under German than French rule. They systematically refused to sell food to the French troops even for money, preferring to reserve it for the Germans, and they did this with an inexplicable unconsciousness of the gravity of their conduct and the results that it might have for them. This soldier confirmed the story about the traitorous mayor. It seemed to be known to everybody in the Argonne. He added that the spies were so numerous among the native inhabitants on the Eastern front that the French troops could not move a step without the Germans instantly being made aware of it.

That there has been revealed an extraordinary number of traitors among the French populations of the invaded regions is now certain. The reports on the subject are too numerous and unanimous to leave any doubt about it. That many of these traitors have been individually detected and shot is also certain. They seem to have done their foul work with zeal and ingenuity, and to have taken desperate risks. It is strange, indeed, that so many people could thus be found willing to sacrifice their lives on the altar of treason, as it were. I am disposed to think that one of the chief explanations, apart from the temptation of money, which does not explain the zealous "parti pris" of these betrayals, lies in the weakening of national ties which has been, and must inevitably have been, brought about by bad government. The French Republican Government, just like our own Government in England, is reaping what it has sown. If a government is constantly by its own example preaching the doctrine of selfish ambition, and contempt for the rights of others, the gospel of the "business man" and the "arriviste," which is inspired by unscrupulous greed, if it roughrides all traditional principles of social and political morality, and denies the gospel of Christ, which is after all the only ethical rule of life to which simple folk can cling, it must not be surprised if from the minds of these same simple people all sense of personal moral responsibility, and with it of patriotism, is uprooted. When you have taught the humble peasant to deny the religion in which his father and mother believed, the next thing he will do will be to overthrow the other ideals and deny his country.

And if you happen to be the Government of that country you will find yourself involved in the general destruction of the icons. For the last twenty-five years there has been an almost uninterrupted succession of political scandals in France. The number of public men who have figured on the political stage during that period, whose reputations for single-minded patriotism and administrative honesty are unsullied, is discreditably small. Little wonder, therefore, if a certain proportion of the inhabitants of the frontier regions of France, bordering Germany, end by convincing themselves of the superiority of the German governing machine, which, grind as it may, grinds with a certain impartiality. That this feeling was becoming general in Alsace I have heard from many persons competent to speak upon the subject. The Francophile spirit in Alsace was largely kept aflame by the efforts of the Catholic clergy out of loyalty to their religion—France still passing with them as a Catholic country as compared with Protestant Prussia; but the status of the Alsatian Catholic clergy was incontestably better under German rule than is that of the Catholic clergy in France since the denunciation of the Concordat.

It is clear also that much the same social and political changes as in France have taken place in Great Britain, and have been brought about by the same cause—the introduction into our public life, with the incoming of mobocracy, of a low standard of public morality. The infection has gradually spread to both parties in the State. Thus we have the spectacle of a widely circulated Conservative organ gravely taking to task a clergyman

for not talking with sufficient indulgence of so-called " War Babies " (mind the h !). The Germans, who have made the same careful study of social psychology that they have of war conditions, know that the moment recently became ripe for insinuating into the already corrupted minds of our half-crazy democratic voters the idea that whether they are under German rule or British rule does not much matter to them, and with the gospel of absolute selfishness to help, which has been instilled into them by their political leaders, the propaganda has been admittedly much more successful than most of us could have imagined. Once such a frame of mind is adopted, the cheerful betrayal of one's country is a reasonable and logical sequence. The attitude of the many thousands of young men in England who are doing nothing to help their country in this its hour of direst need is a passive betrayal, which is as surely aiding German arms as did the specific and deliberate treason of the mayor of the commune near Montfaucon.

*May 15th.*—Reflection : one of the initial causes of wars and of political catastrophes in the world generally is the attempt to outspeed Time. Owing to our inability to conceive what Time is, we think that we can measure it and control it. So, in the name of Progress, we start in to upset institutions which have not yet run their natural course. Time resents this, and ruin and bloodshed, which proceed from upheaval, incoherence, and confusion, are the outcome. Let Time work. He understands his task, and should wisely be left to accomplish it.

Talking of the attitude of the Lorraine population



towards the French soldiers, the Countess told me to-day that her son fully confirmed to her the reports which have reached us from many sides that it is often hostile. His colonel told one shop-keeper in the neighbourhood of Beauséjour that if he refused to supply goods to his men who were willing to pay for them he would decline to interfere if they helped themselves. Young Edouard R—— has a friend who has just returned wounded from the front, who has related to him that when a farmer's wife on one occasion refused to furnish, even for money, him and his companions with the wherewithal to quench their thirst, they killed the woman and sacked her cellars. My comment on that was, "Served her right!"

## CHAPTER XIII

*British lack of ammunition greater than French : Rise of prices : Why the refugees will not work : The poet in politics : George and Dan Leno : Germanophile Italians in Nice : French and Italian relations : French capacity for hatred : France raises troops to help Italy : " Quand allez-vous marcher, marchese ? " : Churchill and Fisher : German and British prisoners : Why the chimney-sweep sweeps : Reconstitution of the British Government : Joffre's method : A French scheme for punishing felon Germans : Italy joins in : Politics of the future : Mutilated orphans*

*May 17th.*—The information which reaches here from French military sources amply confirms the British story that what is hampering the general advance in Flanders is lack of ammunition, but we are told that the deficiency is greater with the British than with the French.

When Italy goes to war, a question apparently of only a few hours, there will, it is feared, be a food pinch here, for the imports from Italy will then almost entirely stop. The poorer classes of Nice are largely dependent on the " pâtes "—macaroni, etc.—imported from Italy. Already prices are going up. At the big grocer's shop in the Rue de l'Hôtel des Postes, cooked roast beef is now priced at 10 francs per kilo, approximately 4s. 2d.

per pound, and cooked pork at 3s. 8d. per pound. Veal is really young beef or cow, and a piece of it which my landlady served up to me at lunch to-day suggested to her the old French joke: "Est-ce un morceau de bœuf que j'ai pris pour cuire, ou un morceau de cuir que j'ai pris pour bœuf?" (Is it a piece of beef that I bought to cook ["cuire"], or a piece of leather ["cuir"] that I bought for beef?)

Th——, whom I met in the afternoon, is in charge of the Refugee Department at the Prefecture, and he told me that though the Government, in order to encourage the refugees, the French particularly, to aid in getting in the crops, has decreed that their allocations or pensions are to be paid to them whether they are earning wages or not, the inducement has not been sufficient to get them to work. This is partially due to laziness and a theory that as they have been driven from their homes, and in many cases ruined, they have a right to look for support in future to the State. On the other hand, these French refugees give an excuse for refusing to work, which is in some measure acceptable. If they bind themselves to undertake agricultural labour (Th—— pronounced the word "ajricultural"), it must necessarily be for the entire season of the harvest. But they are daily expecting that Joffre's promise to drive the Germans out of France will be realised, and as each step forward is made, and their communes are delivered from the Boches, they will claim to be repatriated, so that they can begin at once and without delay to repair their broken homes and get their fields ready for the autumn sowing. That is why they do not want

to tie themselves down. The position, in consequence, is becoming a little difficult for the Government, for the absence of most of the local farmhands at the front will be seriously felt when the time comes to gather in a harvest which promises to be exceptionally abundant.

Apropos of the lazy refugee, the Countess tells me that some French refugees rang a day or two ago at her new flat to ask for money contributions. She told them that she could not make them a present of money, having too little herself, but there was some indispensable work to be done in the flat, such as floor and window cleaning, which somebody would have to be paid to do, and they could have the job if they liked. But they refused on the ground that being refugees their flight had worn them out; they were footsore and leg-weary. Their feet, however, as the Countess remarked, were still agile and robust enough to carry them on a house-to-house visit to collect alms. No doubt they make a better haul this way than they would by working, and in view of what they have gone through one cannot blame them. It is a pity that their personal habits are not more civilised. According to Th—— they are dirty beyond words, and have brought the hotels where they are being gratuitously lodged into an unspeakably filthy condition. The cost to the municipal authorities of putting to rights all that they have deteriorated and damaged by their careless and disgusting practices will be very considerable. "If all French people were like them," said Th——, "I would naturalise myself a Hottentot." They are, of course, almost exclusively from the Northern depart-

ments of France. No one who has recently visited the North of France will be greatly surprised at these details. I remember, a year before the war, putting up at Reims at what looked from the outside a clean and invitingly pretty hôtel, which I afterwards learned had the reputation of being largely frequented by the upper clergy, owing, no doubt, to its being close to the Cathedral. I found it to be quite uninhabitable for people with modern ideas of cleanliness.

*May 18th.*—The French are very much struck, and rightly too, by the overwhelming influence which has suddenly been demonstrated in Italian politics by the poet. It is, without a doubt, Gabriel d'Annunzio who has saved Italy from her Parliamentarians. No greater proof of the essentially high moral character of the Italian people could be afforded than this. It is the triumph of the high-priest of ethics, which every real poet is, over the high-priests of the false religion of expedients. Would to God that in England we had such a poet as this, and a people able and fit to listen to him as the noble Italians have done! And with what unquailing audacity the poet of Italy speaks out: "We have come together to judge a crime of high treason, and to denounce to the contempt and the vengeance of honest men the guilty, all the guilty. . . . The army was ready, full of confidence. There were already numerous examples of civic courage beginning to shine above the hushed tumult. The good leaven was already making the torpid mass rise. And all of a sudden an ignoble aggression is directed against the painful

effort of so many months. You all know the causes and the methods of it. That aggression was inspired, emboldened, and aided by the foreigner. It is the work of an Italian Government, of Italian Parliamentarians having relations with the foreigner, at the service of the foreigner, and its object is to degrade, enslave, and dishonour Italy to the profit of the foreigner. . . . It does not appear that a Ministry formed by Herr von Bülow has the approbation of the King of Italy. But the valets of Herr von Bülow, the fat and the lean, will not resign themselves to that. Until they have been walled up in their kitchens and their cellars they will seek to poison the Italian life, to contaminate in our midst every beautiful and active thing. It is for that reason, I repeat, that every good citizen ought to be against the enemy at home, a soldier who fights without truce or giving of quarter. Even if blood is to be shed, it will be blood as blessed as that which is shed in the trenches."

Substituting "enemy" for "foreigner" this speech could equally well have been delivered in England. We have Parliamentarians whose methods and aims in no way differ from those of the Italian Parliamentarians denounced by d'Annunzio. They, too, seek to poison the British life, to contaminate, in our midst, every beautiful and active thing. They are the fat and the lean valets of the German Government, and they do not resign themselves to abandon office when public opinion calls upon them to do so. They have commerce with the enemy, and are at the service of the enemy to degrade, to enslave, and to dishonour Great Britain for the profit of the enemy—which, by the way,

is worse, to the extent of the difference between a declared enemy and a mere foreigner, than the crime of treason which d'Annunzio so passionately denounces. But where is our poet to tell this to his fellow-Englishmen, and where is our public morally intelligent enough to listen to him, and if need be to act on his words? I used to think that Lloyd George was a poet, what with his Celtic temperament, his long hair, and the curious resemblance between his platform methods and the scenic virtuosity of that great imaginative artist, the late Dan Leno. But we cannot expect him to take up such a theme. There is nothing in it which sufficiently resembles a comic song to please his admirers, and it is non-political. Then there is Winston Churchill, but the greatest poetical effort of that illustrious statesman's career was made a few days ago, when he begged the English nation not to allow the loss of the *Lusitania* to divert its attention from the satisfactory condition of maritime trade. His brain must be allowed to lie fallow for a time after an exhausting outburst of that kind. Evidently there is no one.

Maître R—— said this afternoon that to his knowledge there was a large number of Germanophile Italians in Nice, and that he recently had quite an animated dispute with two of them in a tramway. Their contention was that Italy was wrong to throw over her alliance with Germany, and to join France, for France had never acted otherwise than with hostility towards Italy, while the commercial and industrial debt that Italy owed to Germany was very great. Germany had furnished her with the money to work out her industrial

salvation, while France had until recently tried to boycott her productions. Maître R—— had replied that Germany's financial help had not been disinterested or gratuitous, and the consequence was that nearly all Italian trade was now in German hands. To this the Italians replied that even supposing it were so, the Germans were not eternally rubbing up the Italians the wrong way as the French were so fond of doing. Here I could not refrain from pointing out to my French friend as delicately as possible, and the French do not mind, in fact they welcome, plain statements (as the English never do) if there is clearly no intention to wound, that the attitude of the French towards the Italians previous to the war, and to a great though less extent afterwards, had always seemed to me unnecessarily unsympathetic. It is true that I do not know the Italians as I know the French. But there is a section of the French population which really makes a speciality of hatred. Invite them to hate and they will meet you half-way. Within the quarter of a century during which I have lived in France, Frenchmen of this type have been in a state of rabid hatred at different intervals of England, Italy, Germany (as was only natural), Spain, and practically every people with whom they had any dealings or intercourse, and their only diversion from these hatreds of foreign nations was to hate one another. Invite such a Frenchman as this to love or admire another nation, and he is very loath indeed to follow your lead. He seems to think that you are robbing France of what should be exclusively hers. Maître R—— admitted the truth of this criticism to a certain extent, but maintained



that it applied only to a very ignorant and influential class of his countrymen. My reflection was that though they were doubtless as ignorant as he liked to think them, they were not entirely lacking in influence, and I was convinced that the effort I have so often been conscious of here on the part of a certain political clique to minimise the value of the British military and naval performances was a case in point. Maître R—— had already mentioned, before the question of the Italians came up, the disappointment widely felt in France that the British Navy had not made a better showing. I hold no brief for the British Admiralty and its coxcombical First Lord, but I asked R—— to bear in mind that this criticism of our Army and Navy, coming from the French, had the disadvantage of coinciding with what the Germans would like people to believe about us. The English would bite their tongues off before they would express a "Boche" view of the French military operations. Our Press was very generous in its praise of the French army and its performances, and I was a trifle hurt to find so little echo of this sentiment in the French Press with respect to our Army and Navy. However, I attributed this to the intrigues of an unscrupulous Parliamentary group, with cosmopolitan interests and relations, at the head of which was M——.

Maître R—— was convinced that Italy must now join the Allies, and is actually on the point of doing so. He feared, in common with many Frenchmen, that this may prove a cause of weakness to the Allies, for Italy's strength is not known, and may be less than is generally supposed. Already France

has organised an entire division to go to her aid, which is partially composed of the 116th Regiment, newly created here in Nice, of a mixed regiment of Alpinists and Turcos, and of a regiment of Chasseurs, and these are now waiting on the Italian frontier to cross over and join the Italian army as soon as Italy decides to march.

Later in the afternoon I said to the Marquis de F——, our Italian Delegate, “*Et quand allez-vous marcher, marchese ?*” “*Peut-être cette nuit !*” was the sardonic reply.

*May 19th.*—There is no reference to the matter as yet in the French papers, from which it has evidently been censored out, but the *Daily Telegraph* of two days ago, just arrived here, announces that differences have arisen between Churchill and Fisher, and that the resignation of Fisher is looked upon as likely. If any definite proof were needed of the utter incompetence of the present British Government to conduct the affairs of the British nation it could be supplied by the fact that for months past it has been possible for an ordinary Englishman, living at Nice, to register the various symptoms, day by day, which indicated that sooner or later this result was inevitable. It was not plain to Mr. Churchill and his friends that the choice of Lord Fisher to succeed Prince von Battenberg, and the whole Battenberg incident, though it may have been to the First Lord's personal interest at the time, was not in the nation's interest, but this was perfectly plain to two Englishmen sitting in a café in Bordeaux.

On the larger issue of the policy of the British

Government generally with respect to Germany, the French people with whom I have discussed it are all of one mind as to the answer to these questions. Is the maintaining of German prisoners in Donington Hall in conditions of comfort and luxury which are foreign to the lives of 90 per cent. of English people in the interest of Germany or the interest of England? Is it even a democratic measure? Is the systematic suppression of news of the war, which if published would undoubtedly help recruiting, in the interest of Germany or of England? Is the permission granted by the Home Office to over 20,000 Germans to live at large in England in Germany's interest or ours? Is the indifference of the British Government to the sufferings of the 20,000 British war prisoners in Germany, as shown by the fact that it has not even taken the trouble to let the British public, always good-hearted and generous, know by what means these starving heroes can be succoured, a proof of German or British sympathies? Questions of this kind might be multiplied, but the answer to all of them is the same, and demonstrates the existence in England of influences that are not English. What are they? Whose are they? That is the problem which certain organs of the London Press seem anxious at the present moment to elucidate. But they do not seem to us who live in France to go to the root of the matter. The French, who have a far more elaborate political education than the English, diagnose such a situation with the facility and certainty that an ordinary medical practitioner diagnoses a case of measles. Their verdict, which is that of anybody who uses his eyes, may be

conveyed in the story which I now relate for the second time of the chimney-sweep who is engaged in sweeping his neighbour's chimney. Why is he doing it? Is he mad? Is he a philanthropist with private means, or is he doing it *because he is paid to do it*? Obviously he is paid to do it. But what proof have you of this? None whatever. There is no proof needed.

*May 20th.*—It is a huge relief to learn from a London telegram to-day that the British Government is to be reconstituted. It is not a moment too soon, and one's only fear is that it may be too late. The next step should be to establish a Court of Inquiry into the conduct of the ex-Ministers and public men who have been influencing the war operations in the interest of the enemy. Whether stupidity, self-conceit, or treachery should be proved to have inspired them, they are equally deserving of punishment. The inquiry should be non-Parliamentary, and should in no circumstances be presided over by a Jew, not even by the Lord Chief Justice of England. It should in fact be a trial of English public servants by Englishmen, though this may seem a most anomalous demand as times go. It is entirely creditable to France that the French Government cast the undesirable member from its midst in the first month of the war, and it is equally to the discredit of her Ally that it was not until the tenth month of the war that England summoned up the necessary courage and honesty to follow this example. General Joffre, and with him apparently Marshal French, assisted materially in bringing about the reconstitution of the Cabinet in France,

Joffre by telling M. Poincaré that unless M. Messimy was removed from the Ministry of War he would resign, and he textually added, "And I will leave you my képi [military cap]," which was lying on the President's desk, "as a souvenir," while French, on his part, threatened, it is said, to withdraw his troops behind Paris. It is due to M. Poincaré to add that he was entirely in accord with the urgent demands of General Joffre and Marshal French, and that it was owing to his energy and promptness of decision that the crisis was averted. The chief reproach against Messimy was the same that is being made against the late government in England, that he had not taken, and was not taking, the necessary measures to supply the army with ammunition. I noted in my Diary at the time (August 1914) that the French army was evidently suffering from a deficiency in this respect, and produced the figures which proved it. Messimy had also declined to accede to General Joffre's request for the removal of a number of incompetent generals, who owed their rank to political, and above all to Freemason, influences. Messimy interfered with the military operations, although wholly incompetent in the matter, just as Winston Churchill has done with the British naval operations. As a result of putting his foot down, which Fisher was, it seems, incapable of doing, General Joffre got his own way, and without loss of time, for dealing with the generals who had proved their incapacity, and his method of getting rid of them—as I have already noted they numbered over 170—was characteristic. To prevent any discussion which would have been painful on both sides, Joffre's habit was to send for the general he

was about to dismiss, and say : " My dear General, the Government has accorded you a long holiday at such and such a place." " But," began the General. . . . " I'm afraid there's no time for leave-taking," interrupted Joffre, and taking out his watch, " it's now such and such a time, and the train to take you to your destination leaves in exactly forty-five minutes. You have only just time to pack up. Good-bye ! " Joffre, by the way, is himself a Freemason, but he does not, as so many French generals did, owe his career to this fact, nor, fortunately, does he allow it to influence in any way his choice of officers.

*May 20th.*—J. H—— amused us this morning by relating a suggestion of his wife's as to the most suitable punishment to be meted out to the felon Kaiser and his equally guilty family, and all the murderous brood of German officers and officials responsible for the Hun atrocities. Madame H—— is not " commode " in private life, and it is highly characteristic of her to conceive the idea that, inasmuch as a very large sum of money will have to be found to cover all the losses occasioned by the war, this could most effectively be done by parading these guilty German personages in cages all over the world, and charging the public 50 centimes a head for the privilege of spitting in their faces. She calculates that many millions of francs could be raised in this way. There might be popular days set apart for the working classes, when the price would be reduced to 20 centimes, and gratuitous matinées for schools and institutions. Of course it would be open to the generous rich to give what they liked.

This evening the appearance of the Avenue de la Gare, the chief thoroughfare of Nice, which irreverent Englishmen occasionally dub the Avenue de la Gar[lic], recalls the first days of the mobilisation of the army—the crowd in front of the *Petit Niçois* extending all across the road, and the pavements thronged with people waiting to read the news that Italy has at last thrown in her lot with the Allies. The Italian flag has been hoisted from the balconies of the two Nice daily papers, side by side with the flags of the Triple Entente and of Serbia, and from time to time a shout goes up of “Viva l’Italia ! Viva la Francia ! Abasso l’Austria !” There was a review of troops held this afternoon on the Promenade des Anglais, to which the Italian Consul-General, Baron Acton, was officially invited, and as he shook hands with the Prefect he said: “I am happy to assist at this ceremony for the first time side by side with our Allies.” The weather to-night was lovely, very similar to what it was in the early days of last August, and the play of colour and warm gleaming light on the faces of the eager population under the rich green leaves of the trees, as it strolled up and down the pavements or watched the newspaper transparencies for the latest telegrams, vividly recalled the exciting hours which preceded the declaration of war. All our early excitement (which had flagged a little of late) returned, and by a coincidence the Committee of Nations found itself gathered together at the Café de P—— “au complet,” save for Des G——, who is in Spain on a cloth-hunting expedition for the army. But his place was worthily filled by J. H——. There was a distinctly anticlerical note introduced

into our debate, due to H——'s violent hostility to the Church for reasons which are probably attributable to his medical training. There is no hatred like that between the medicine-man and the priest, for they are rival miracle-workers—no cure, whether of the body or the soul, being ever accomplished without a miracle of some kind. H—— contended that the Church is now making a tremendous effort to regain its lost political influence in France, and with this object in view is playing up Joan of Arc for all she is worth. He formulated an accusation I have often heard before, that the wounded who do not confess to the priest or attend Mass are less well treated by the Red Cross nurses, who are nuns, than those who do. Finally, after a confirmatory outburst of anticlericalism from the Spanish Marquis de B——, who attributes all the misfortunes of Spain to her priest-ridden condition, it was decided by a unanimous vote that only those who had been at the front must be allowed to speak the deciding word in this question of the Church. Her future position must depend upon what the warriors felt and said when they came back. J. H—— went so far as to maintain that no one who had not played a personal part in the war should be allowed, during a considerable lapse of time, to exercise a political vote or have any kind of voice in the country's affairs. From all that I can gather, after listening to both sides, the clergy have not lost popularity as a consequence of the war, but would rather seem to have gained the respect of many who were most bitterly opposed to them previously.

Later in the evening Paul Brulat, the well-known



novelist, came in. He is acting as secretary-general for the "Orphelins de la Guerre," and showed us some interesting photographs of orphans, who are also refugees, before and after they had escaped from the hands of the Boches and had been rescued by his institution. The difference was shocking, at the same time admirable. He is expecting the arrival at Cap Ferrat, where his head-quarters are, of 200 children mutilated by the Boches, most of them with their hands or the fingers of their right hands cut off, this, of course, to prevent their subsequently becoming soldiers. He is not sure, however, whether they will be drafted to the Riviera orphanage or to Etretat.

## CHAPTER XIV

*Asphyxiating gas and British philanthropists : The curse of Peace Congresses : A zoological comparison : René N——'s gallantry wins the war medal : The Business Muddle : The British Business Man's week-ends : A constipated Prime Minister : Exchange on Italian notes : The scandal of the Nice villas : Hoarding gold : An enigmatic Belgian : The English at Ypres : Belgian girls and German soldiers : What the Mayor of Poperinghe said*

May 21st.—Neither the French nor the English seem disposed to follow the German example and use asphyxiating and poisonous gas. This is surely rather absurd. After all asphyxiation by water is a notable process in marine warfare, and whether a soldier is suffocated, drowned, or blown to pieces by a shell comes to precisely the same thing in the long run, and to describe one method as more humane than the other is a little fastidious. Questions of comparative suffering cannot be solved by mere onlookers. Probably the main opposition comes from the ordinary ammunition manufacturers, who object to an innovation which threatens their profits. Lord Armstrong was prompt in getting in his word in favour of a gas which was to be as little effective as possible. Then there is the busy-body and self-advertising philanthropist and pacifist,

whose ignorant, mischievously directed activities, which are never wholly disinterested, have been such a curse to both England and France (though in a less degree to the latter country), warping their outlook on realities, muddling their moral sense, and by tying their hands, yielding them over, in the end, victims to their worst and most unscrupulous foes. The various Peace Conferences at The Hague have done more harm to civilisation than any previous wars, for they lulled into unhealthy slumber nations whose instincts are not naturally bellicose, and veiled from them with a cloak of flimsy conventions the murderous projects of a people planning nothing but war, to whom these scraps of paper were an additional and most useful arm. There are certain insects which inject a paralysing anæsthetic into their prey before they proceed to devour it. This interesting artifice naturally did not escape the attention of the scientific branch of the German General Staff. They found the insect to supply them with all the poison of this kind that they needed in the person of Mr. Carnegie with his Peace Palace.

René N——'s gallantry has, so his half-sister tells me, earned him a "citation" in the regimental orders, which wins for him the "médaille de guerre" or War Medal.

*May 22nd.*—We generally resent being called a nation of shopkeepers, a phrase invented by Napoleon, which has since become one of the favourite parrot-cries of the Germans. But "after all, this is a nation of business people," says one of the London halfpenny papers in a leader to-day;

and it propounds the idea, in view no doubt of a future campaign, that the Government of England should be entrusted to the Business Man. "During the last nine and a half months business men have been amazed at such matters as the Drink Muddle, the Shell Muddle, the Alien Muddle, the Soldiers' Hut Muddle, the Recruiting Muddle, and all the other muddles." Yes, but what about the Business Muddle? The paper in question has nothing to tell us about that. In point of fact among "all the other muddles" there has been no muddle to equal it. For the standards of English business, or shop-keeping if you prefer the Napoleonic phrase, were never lower than they are to-day, and nothing would be more disastrous for the government of the country than to entrust it to the business man, on the supposition that the British business man is more intelligent, enterprising, energetic, or honest than British men in any other walk of life, including politics, or is less of a muddler. It is owing to the effeteness and futility of the antiquated methods obstinately persisted in by the British business man that British trade struck its flag to German competition on half the markets of the world. This had been going on for years past, and though no two British business men are agreed as to the remedy for it, there can be no doubt that it is one of the indirect causes of the war. It was the decadence of the British business man which provoked the greed of the German, his imagination already fired by initial successes, to the extent of conceiving the dream of definitely wresting from Great Britain her commercial supremacy, and it was to achieve this that he really went to war. The great fault com-

mitted by the German, as many people in Germany are now beginning to recognise, was that of impatience. Had he chosen to wait, the British business man would sooner or later have hanged himself in the rope of his own indolence and arrogant stupidity, to which he was adding new lengths every day. Then the war would never have broken out. The British business man has been saved, for the time being at any rate, by the British fighting man, who is the British gentleman in the fullest and best sense, which covers every rank and class. To what extent the British business man deserves this is a somewhat invidious question. We know that he is not in the least bit grateful for his rescue. But unless he changes his spots, and his skin, he may be sure that the superior spirit of organisation, the keener energy, and, when all is said and done, the greater trustworthiness and stricter honesty of the German business man, will beat him again in the future, whatever may be the immediate results of the present war.

Ah, the British business man, with his week-ends devoted to the degrading game of golf—while the German business man is working—and his general preference to living on the marginal difference between what he pays and what he really owes. It is you who are going to solve all our Ministerial Muddles for us, are you? I don't think!

One of the first things that one discovers about the British business man is that he is much too busy as a rule to mind his own business. When you meet him in his office (never earlier than 10 A.M.) he will as a rule waste several moments of your time and his by explaining that as a business man he

has very little time to spare. If you want to make an enemy for life, and a business man blush, you have only to reply that your time is at least as valuable as his, and that he has already wasted more than enough of it by this totally superfluous preamble. Later you will make the further discovery that the British business man rarely has the time to attend to his business correspondence, and that when he writes to the Continent he regularly understamps the letter. Rarely will you make him understand that it is useless to enclose an English Id. stamp for a reply to a letter sent abroad. Then when he is not at lunch (two to three hours), or has closed up his office from Friday afternoon to Tuesday morning, or has gone to watch a cricket match at Lord's, he is falling ill. It is strange how often it happens in the business life of London that transactions are interrupted or come to a sudden end because the business man you have been dealing with is laid up with influenza and cannot sign a cheque, or he has been ordered away by his doctor for six months' complete rest where no business letters are allowed to follow him, or is undergoing a serious operation in a nursing home. In no other country in the world does the nursing home cause so many well-laid business schemes to gang agley as in Great Britain. This shadow of the nursing home over the British business man, the ill-health which apparently so persistently pursues him, are not, obviously enough, attributable to overwork—he rarely knows what work means—but, as an illustrious man of science tells me, to a surfeit of breakfast, of that weary, interminable, slow-munched British breakfast, with its staple dish of eggs and

bacon, the poisonous biliousness of which is in the long run fatal to the liver, and with it the digestion, and finally to the nervous system and to the brain. Hence the illnesses, the serious operation, the nursing home! Hence the cold, unenterprising outlook upon life, the lack-lustrous conscience, the hidebound self-conceit, the physical laziness, and mental dullness of the British business man. I am reminded in this connection of a remark made by a former President of the French Republic, Monsieur Fallières, to a friend who found him in his study just after M. Clemenceau, then Prime Minister, had gone out. "Oh, mon cher ami," exclaimed M. Fallières, wiping with his handkerchief the perspiration which was pouring down his face, "if you only knew what an awful fate it is to be President of the Republic, and to be obliged to have daily dealings with a Prime Minister who suffers from chronic constipation!"

The Marquis de F—— was complaining to-day that he loses 12 per cent. on the exchange of Italian notes into French notes at the Crédit Lyonnais. The loss of 1200 francs on 10,000 lire is appreciable. He gets a somewhat better exchange from the local Nice changers.

There has been a good deal of grumbling in Nice because the splendid villas on the Riviera belonging to German and Austrian princes and millionaires, though duly sequestered by the Government and placed at the disposition of the military authorities for use as hospitals or convalescent homes, have not in the majority of cases been converted to these purposes. The reason, I am told, is that a "bande noire," in other words, a gang of unscrupulous

speculators, with head-quarters at Marseilles, and branch establishments, as it were, all over the Riviera, have been conspiring with the notaries and certain banks having mortgages on these properties to suspend the operation of the Ministerial decree on the ground that it might endanger or damage the interests of the French mortgagers, as well as other French interests. In cases where the banks hold mortgages on property of this description they will foreclose the moment the unpaid interest on the mortgage equals its amount, and as the mortgagee, being an alien enemy, has no means of paying the interest even if he were willing to do so, the foreclosure is also a foregone conclusion. The scheme is that the property should then be sold for an old song among the gang by the classical "knock-out" method, and the profits, which must be considerable, divided amongst its members. It is in the fear that the conversion of these sequestered properties into hospitals or homes may diminish their ultimate value that the gang is putting forth all its strength and influence to prevent the military authorities from exercising their undoubted right to take possession of them. All sorts of legal quibbles, against which the military authorities, not being lawyers, are practically powerless, are employed as dilatory tactics, and though the opposition is purely of the inert kind it suffices to put off the evil day until the army has been obliged by the urgency of its needs to make other arrangements. This scandalous conspiracy entails needless suffering on the wounded and the sick, but the Prefect of Nice, though aware of it, is doing nothing to prevent it.



*May 23rd.*—The issue of the war bonds has had a curious effect upon the many inhabitants of the south who have been hoarding gold. They are eager to purchase these bonds on account of their high rate of interest, but are ashamed to produce their gold at the counters of the banks in the localities where they reside. So to avoid this exposure they take long journeys; the Marseillais come in great numbers to make their purchases of war bonds in Nice, and the Niçois travel with the same object to Marseilles and even as far as Lyons.

A Scotch-Australian living at Nice, who, being temporarily ruined by the war, is obliged for economy's sake—he is fond of swimming—to spend most of his time in the sea, and for that reason has been given the nickname of “The Beachcomber” by a little party of fellow-bathers at La Californie, has introduced to them, and subsequently to me, an enigmatic Belgian from Ypres. He has at the same time privately expressed the opinion that the Belgian is “potty,” which is apparently Scotch-Australian slang for weak-minded. The Belgian, a tall, greyish-haired man, in a brown coat, speaks English (he persists in not speaking French), with a strong German accent. He has a grievous tale to tell of what befell him at Ypres (he pronounces it *Eeper*, in the German fashion), but the moral of it all is that the German soldier is no worse than others. This Belgian accompanies his narration with a particularly aggravating smirk. When the German soldiers have committed atrocities, he says, it is because their officers have ordered them to do so. [Smirk.] “It is like this. The soldier, he is told to arrest any one not a Gairman who is carrying

arms. The Gairman, a good fellow, but not very intelligent, meets the local gendarme, who, of course, carries a revolver. He says to him, 'You are armed, you are a franc-tireur, you come with me.' The gendarme, he naturally protests. 'But I am not a franc-tireur,' he say, 'I am the policeman. [Smirk.] I am obliged to carry a revolver. I am responsible for the public safety. The revolver is part of my uniform.' But the soldier drags him before the lieutenant, who also tells him he is a franc-tireur. Again the gendarme explains and protests, but it is no good. The lieutenant—[smirk]—orders: 'Tie him up like this—the arms stretched out as on a cross—to the railings of the churchyard opposite the mairie.' [Smirk, smirk.] Then he say, 'Have you a wife—[smirk]—and children? [Smirk, smirk.] Where do they live?' The Gairman officer sends for them, and makes them stand just in front of the gendarme—[smirk]—and behind four soldiers with loaded rifles. Then he gives the order to fire, and so the policeman is shot—[smirk]—in the presence of his wife and children. [Smirk, smirk.] The poor soldiers obliged to carry out these orders think of their own wives and children, and they cry. They cry because they are good fellows. It is only the lieutenant who is a brute, and even he is doing what he thinks right. It is so in all armies; there are the good and the bad. But the Gairman soldier is the best disciplined of all. [Smirk.] And the more disciplined is the soldier, the more professional, the less you have to fear from him. The first English soldiers that you sent to Eeper were such nice fellows! They were professional. But the others! No, do not ask me. [Smirk.] Well, I

tell you all soldiers when they are billeted in private houses commit a lot of damage. Some of them do so wickedly, wilfully. Others break up the furniture out of high spirits. The English soldier is very high-spirited. [Smirk.] In my own house at Eeper this is what happened. One evening a band of soldiers arrived, excited, drunk perhaps. They put the revolver under the nose of my housekeeper. [Smirk.] They emptied the cellar, and because they did not find enough wine—some Belgian soldiers had been there before them—they made complete havoc of the house, you know, and then they ran amuck through the town, firing into all the windows, and wounding quite a number of poor people.”

“But do you mean to tell me that those were *English* soldiers?”

“Oh, do not ask me that question, sir. [Smirk, smirk, smirk.] No, don't, please don't! What good it do? No, I will not tell you of what nationality they were. All I say is that it took place at Eeper, and in my own house. Besides I tell you all wars are alike;—[smirk]—all soldiers are the same—[smirk, smirk]—English, Belgians, Gairmans, all alike, a few bad, but nearly all good, very good. And you know, it is only the bad ones that you hear about. The Gairman officer is very polite, too polite, in fact he make things worse by his politeness. To be informed with an elaborate bow that your house is to be burned down and your father shot before your eyes for what he not done—[smirk]—is more galling than rude speech would be. But then the Gairman officer so highly educated! [Smirk.]” After a pensive pause, during which his

face was several times wreathed in smirks, the affable Belgian continued: "The English soldier, very nice; but he has a hobby. Everybody he sees who does not speak English he takes for a *spy*. [Smirk.] That is because he has always lived in an island and does not speak the languages. The Gairman, of course, he speaks all the languages, so he is much more sensible in this respect.

"And then, sir, there is that question of the ill-treatment of young girls. It has been greatly exaggerated. Most of the young girls were willing. [Smirk.] Who is to know what is in the heart of a young girl? [Smirk, smirk.] Everybody was astonished. One had known in one's own surroundings numbers of young girls, respectable, well brought up, of well-to-do parents, whom one would never have suspected of any evil tendencies. The Gairman soldiers come along, and these young girls welcomed them. [Smirk.] Believe me, sir, it was so indeed. [Smirk, smirk.] And now that these Gairman soldiers are gone, behold these young girls, to the utmost amazement of those who knew them before, and believed them to be respectable, continue to practise their new profession openly and with joy. It sounds almost incredible, but it is a positive fact, sir, that the Gairman commanding officer at Poperinghe [the Belgian pronounced this name too in the German fashion, 'Popringhy'] complained to the mayor of the town of the extensive disease which had broken out among his troops which was traceable to the young girls of the locality. [Smirk.] The mayor replied with great dignity and courage that previous to the arrival of the Gairmans

Popringhy had enjoyed a clean bill of health. [Smirk, smirk.]”

To the Belgian's criticism of the English soldier that it was his “hobby” to take everybody who did not speak English for a spy, the answer was that he must be forgiven for that, for it was due to the excessive zeal of the newly converted. There was a time when the superior Englishman, and all Englishmen who had never quitted England were superior, laughed at the mere idea of German espionage. Now they have learned a lesson, and it is not surprising if they go to the other extreme. And perhaps a symptom of this tendency lies in the fact that G—— has noticed the great fondness shown by this Belgian for walking excursions, and that during the few days he has been living at Nice since he left “Eeper,” he has explored on foot the whole neighbourhood as far as Sospel and the Italian frontier, including the entire system of French forts between Nice and Ventimiglia, with which he seems to have a wide technical acquaintance.

The proclamation of war between Italy and Austria, which was announced late to-night on the transparencies displayed by the Nice daily newspapers, provoked, as can be imagined, a wild outburst of enthusiasm from the large Italian population here. But the native Niçois remained to a great extent imperturbable. This is in accordance with his traditional attitude of coldness towards events which do not directly concern the interests of Nice. My landlady, who is a Parisienne, says that the patriotism of the Niçois has no more value than “un quartier de chien” (“a side of dog,”

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presumably estimated as butcher's meat). This is, of course, an exaggeration. A great number of Niçois have been killed and wounded in the war, and those who have fought at the front have certainly done their duty as courageously and nobly as Frenchmen of any other category.

## CHAPTER XV

*Departure of the Italian conscripts from Nice : An unforgettable scene : Why four thousand were only eight : " Tartarin ne perd pas ses droits " : French alarm at political conditions in England : The enigmatic Belgian again : A letter from Kitchener's Army : French opinion on the new British Cabinet : A Nice sympathiser with Germany : The Senegalese at the Dardanelles : René N——'s description of a trench attack : Joffre waiting for Kitchener : Situation in the Argonne*

May 24th.—The departure of the Italians was an unforgettable scene. The train was to start at 2.30 in the afternoon, and a crowd estimated at 20,000 gathered outside the station. In anticipation of a contingent of at least 4000 men leaving to join the Italian colours a special train of quite unusual length had been got in readiness. The entrances to the station platforms were carefully guarded by a strong force of police, and huge printed notices in Italian were pasted up on the station walls: " This way to the special train for the Italian conscripts." All the traffic was stopped in the Avenue de la Gare and the adjoining streets, the crowd completely blocking them up. It was just such a mob as gathers when the Carnival is at its height, only the blazing summer sun and the

deep blue scintillating sky overhead gave a far more brilliant colouring and bedazzlement to the scene than in grey Lent time. Thousands of little Italian flags, red, white, and green, were being waved aloft by the surging, delighted masses. The municipal authorities were at the station; there was the Deputy Mayor with the town councillors, the Prefect with his secretaries, the General commanding the entrenched camp of Nice with his brilliantly uniformed staff, the Italian Consul, in full rig, with the personnel of the Consulate.

A thunderous roar of applause came rolling up the Avenue de la Gare announcing the approach of the Italians, who had formed themselves into a beflowered and beflagged procession. They came in motor-cars, vehicles, and on foot, to the accompaniment of bands and singing. In the first car was a man carrying a wooden gallows on which hung a figure representing the German Emperor, crowned with a lamp-shade, while from his feet was suspended a Chianti flask ("fiasco"). The old Garibaldian of Nice, with one arm (he lost the other in a building accident when working as a stonemason), was on another car, in his glorious time-stained red tunic. Recognisable in the excited rabble that accompanied and followed the procession were all the Italian waiters of Nice, and since the war there have been no others.

Inside the station the proceedings were worthy of the best traditions of the Midi. The Prefect made a glowing speech, to which the Italian Consul responded with equal fervour. Then the Prefect wept, and falling on the neck of the Italian Consul, kissed him. The General made a speech. Every-



body made a speech. In the meanwhile all sorts of mysterious manœuvring was going on with carriages and locomotives on the Ventimiglia line within and just outside the station. This sort of "tuning up" was watched with acute interest by the people in the Avenue de la Gare, waiting to greet the Italian train as it passed across the bridge over the avenue, en route for the frontier. Whenever a locomotive appeared the sea of little Italian flags became wildly agitated. For nearly two hours locomotives and empty carriages were kept running up and down with a disappointing and seemingly aimless persistence which got on everybody's nerves. One ridiculously small engine, which might have dated from the days of Stephenson's "Rocket," was particularly active and irritating. The crowd showed admirable patience, thrilled occasionally by a long engine-whistle; but still no train. Suddenly, however, three very loud triumphal hoots proclaimed without a doubt that the patriotism and good temper of the populace were at last to be rewarded. The flags fluttered hysterically. That low murmur arose in which the crowd in all countries of the world says to itself: "Here they come!" A thundering locomotive rolled on to the bridge. It was the train at last. Carriage after carriage passed, filled with ordinary passengers, middle-aged men and women and children, in everyday attire, pleased to respond to the plaudits which were not, however, destined for them. At last there shot forth a blaze of colour, red, white, and green, from a big Italian flag hoisted at the door of one solitary carriage. Behind it, leaning out of the windows, were eight men, eight

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Italian conscripts, waving their arms wildly, and shouting the Italian national anthem—just eight, not one more. The 20,000 mouths of the crowd were wide open to cheer. There was a moment of intense suspense. Then those 20,000 mouths shut and spread out into a broad smile. It was one of the most dramatically comic effects that I have ever witnessed. A moment later the crowd had recovered from the shock, and the eight Italian conscripts were as heartily cheered as if they had been 4000.

It subsequently became known that as the order for the mobilisation of the Italians had been issued on a public holiday, very few of them had been able to respond to it, owing to the banks being closed, which made it impossible for them to wind up their affairs at so short a notice. They have been accorded a delay until the end of the month. Still one could not help feeling, after the scene with the local authorities within the station in Nice, that no more here than anywhere else in the Midi “*Tartarin ne perd pas ses droits.*”

The *Petit Niçois* publishes the information which N—— brought back from Paris, and attributed to a sure source, that Lord Kitchener is about to come to France with an army of 400,000 men, and consequently to quit the War Office. This is interesting, inasmuch as it indicates what may have been Kitchener's intentions some little time ago, for N——'s information was no doubt derived from the French Ministry of War.

Obviously recent events have brought about a change of plan. One thing is certain, that the French are at last taking alarm at the Ministerial

and political conditions in England, as well they may do. It is perhaps fortunate that the majority of them are still ignorant of how matters really stand. They have no true conception of the individual and relative value of the statesmen who are directing British policy.

I rarely meet N—— without his remarking that the Belgians are “au-dessous de tout.” This afternoon he related to me that in the tramway he had been sitting next to a tall, greyish haired man, wearing a brown coat, who, pointing to the news describing French successes displayed in the windows of the *Eclaireur*, had said to him that it was all a pack of lies. This roused N——’s indignation, and in the altercation which followed—the man in the brown jacket did not, of course, know that he was talking to the editor of another Nice paper—N—— commented on his accent being a foreign one, and advised him to mind his own business; thereupon Brown-jacket replied that being a Belgian he was a better Frenchman than N——. This caused N——’s meridional blood to boil over, and he told him he was very much mistaken if he thought that France owed any debt of gratitude to the Belgians. It was the other way round. The Belgians by joining the French had saved themselves from ultimate annexation, for this had been Germany’s intention whether Belgium had objected to her territory being violated or not. The scene had ended with threats of personal violence from N——. N—— was convinced that the “coco” in question, whether a Belgian or not, was a sympathiser with Germany, and very probably a spy. Now Monsieur Z——, that brilliant talker from “Eeper,” the “Beach-

comber's " acquaintance, also wears an aggressively brown coat, and is a tall man with greyish hair, and no doubt it is he whom N—— ran up against in the tramway. N——'s description of him, of his accent, his smirk too, his appearance and opinions, tallies perfectly, and now I hear that Monsieur Z—— is about to leave Nice for England. Clearly he will be happiest in England. It is in England, and I fancy in England alone, that he will meet with the cold-blooded cranks, willing to listen to his apologies for German crimes, and in sufficient numbers to give scope and value to his philanthropic efforts to screen Germany from the vengeance and lasting hatred of her victims.

*May 25th.*—I have a letter from S——, in Kitchener's Army, who is now at M——, Surrey. He writes: "We have been frightfully busy lately sham-fighting with the 12th Division. We have been trapped, ambushed, and surrounded on two or three occasions. We have remained out for two days and two nights sometimes, sleeping behind our guns in the night-time. It's a fine life. I must tell you we are now fully equipped and that we are supposed to be leaving for Southampton next Wednesday. I think we will be in France in three weeks' time at the utmost."

*May 26th.*—The list of the members of the new British Cabinet has been received by my French friends here with some astonishment. One of them said to me to-day: "It's puzzling." They ask whether the new Coalition Ministry is likely to last. Patchwork Cabinets generally last longer than even

their enemies anticipate, or their friends hope. Coalition is evidently a step in the right direction. At the beginning of the war it was falsely announced in France that a Coalition Government, practically on the same lines as the actual one, had been arranged in England. The wish was father to the thought. It has taken the English politicians a long time to toe the line, and every day lost has been to the discredit of England and the disadvantage of the Allies. This is fully appreciated here. There is no disputing the fact that we have shown a lack of courage as compared with the French in not getting rid of the weak elements of our Government as promptly as they did. When M. Messimy was bundled unceremoniously out of the Cabinet, there was no idea of giving him a secondary post which would have permitted him to remain as a constant thorn in the side of his colleagues. Then with exemplary energy and decision the Government obliged M. Caillaux to temporarily leave the country. They thus paralysed a dangerous mobocratic movement in its birth, which might easily have entailed a national catastrophe, and they completed its annihilation by including in the new Cabinet two representatives of the Socialists and the Extreme Radical Left, who were thus associated in the detailed administration of the country, saw what was being done, and how the war machine was being worked. Mr. Asquith has tried to do something similar by including a Labour leader in the new British Cabinet.

*May 27th.*—J. H.—related to me a conversation he had had with a notable tradesman of Nice on

the subject of the treatment that should be meted out to Germany after the war. This man would not admit that Germany should by any means be crushed. "No," he said, "the crushing of Germany would mean the military predominance in Europe of the Tsar, and who can tell whether the next Tsar will be as pacifically disposed as his father. A strong Germany will be necessary to act as a buffer between the Russian Empire and the Western States of Europe." This plea in favour of the maintenance of German militarism smells Berlin at twenty leagues, as the French say, and set J. H—— wondering who can be the friends and agents of Germany who are engaged in this pro-German propaganda in Nice and the neighbourhood. That there are such people he does not doubt. They are probably those who ever since the war began have been endeavouring to create doubt in the minds of the French as to the value of the British naval and military operations, for this doubt, if it could be widely spread, would prepare the public mind for a lenient treaty of peace with Germany on the ground that the British had not furnished France with sufficient help for the complete crushing of her enemies. The onus of the failure would fall on Great Britain. In H——'s opinion, the inspiration for this campaign comes from two statesmen, one being an ex-Minister of War, who previous to the war were instrumental in introducing German industrial shares on to the French market. They had been as thick as thieves with the German Emperor, and there is a well-known photograph which represents one of them the ex-Minister, hob-nobbing with William II on

board the *Hohenzollern*. Both are in close personal touch with the Riviera, which accounts for the propaganda taking more active shape here, and in Nice particularly, than elsewhere in France.

From all accounts the Senegalese, who figured so picturesquely in Nice during the winter, have been fearfully cut up at the Dardanelles, in fact almost wiped out. There is a report, which is also contradicted, however, that their commander, General Simmonin, famous for his lion-hearted courage, has been killed. The trustworthy details that reach us indicate that the Senegalese, who are apt to be unfavourably affected by night bombardments, retired under a very heavy fire, but recovered themselves on the following morning, and made a furious attack, retaking their abandoned positions. They threw away their rifles and hurled themselves on to the enemy with their long knives, making a fearful carnage.

*May 28th.*—A letter from L——, who complains of the lack of “comestibles” where he is, and of tobacco. “You must have seen from the official ‘communiqués,’” he says, “that we have given a good report of ourselves at Arras.”

N—— read me an interesting letter from his son René, whose gallant conduct under fire is to receive mention in the regimental orders of the day. It seems as if it were only yesterday, and it is in fact only a few months ago, but months that are as full as years, that I met René, looking no older than a schoolboy, strolling down the Avenue de la Gare on his way to enlist, and I commented to myself on his Southern conception of military

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punctuality which made him keep an appointment at eleven which had been fixed for half-past eight. We were prompt to criticise in those strenuous times. But this casual way of René's hid the courage of a lion, and the eighteen-year-old lad has since covered himself with glory, and in five months' time has won a commission as probationary lieutenant. As his stepmother says, he is "un peu Zouzou," \* which means over-rash, and he would certainly be safer elsewhere than at the front. He writes :

"MY DEAR MOTHER,—I hope you will excuse my silence when you learn that I have been in a trench for the last six days, and that in the night of the 8th to the 9th I received my baptism of fire. I was unusually lucky, and this debut will remain graven in my memory always, so terrible were the circumstances in which it took place. In about an hour's time—from 8.30 to 10 in the evening—I started out three times with the bayonet, was obliged to retreat twice, and installed myself the third time at 6 metres distance from the Boches, and stopped there for the entire night and the day of the 9th until 10 o'clock in the morning, when I was relieved. From 8 to 9.30 in the evening we exploded five sets of mines under the Boche trenches. As soon as this was done 200 Spahis and the 3rd battalion charged with the bayonet, and seized the holes made by the mines as well as three lines of trenches. But the officers fell, and the men, left to themselves, began to give way. The holes were evacuated. At 8.30 I received the

\* "Zouzou," short for Zouave, the Zouaves being noted for their reckless courage.



order to go and occupy the one on the right. Certainly I was not afraid, but my heart beat when I started at the head of my section to cross the 100 metres, under fire, which separated the excavation from the trench. However, I got there, but found such a confusion among the troops already in it that one could no longer distinguish between Boches and Frenchmen. Add to this that there was a hail of shot and shell, that the wounded were shrieking, and that in a hole about a third the size of your garden at the Villa Nadège we were a hundred men of all arms, and you will have only a feeble idea of what it was like. All the time the Spahis and men of the 3rd battalion were fleeing from the trenches that they had taken from the Boches, coming towards us, and thus spreading a panic, which I was able to put a stop to, revolver in hand. I happened to be the highest in rank of all that mob, and thought it my duty to command an orderly retreat, for we were far too numerous.

“Immediately afterwards, I started to assault the excavation, but was soon obliged to evacuate it. At last for the third time I rallied eighteen resolute men of my section, and we started off again. But the Boches had taken advantage of our retreat to reoccupy the excavation, and I was forced to reinstall myself on the edge at 6 metres distance from them. I immediately had a trench dug, and by my fire and our grenades I forced them to retreat to the opposite edge, where they installed themselves in turn. We passed the day of the 9th and a portion of the night entirely isolated from the others, without any channel of communication. Packets of cartridges were thrown to us, and we did without food. In the night of the 9th to the

10th the Boches came out of their excavation, but we repulsed them with the energy of desperation. A few hours afterwards we were relieved in open ground, and since then I have been in the 3rd line in comfortable covered trenches.

"I had relatively few losses in my section ; two killed and seven wounded only. My captain congratulated me, and let me understand that he would propose me for a mention in the order of the day. This is the news exactly related. It is impossible to tell you all that I felt during those few hours, and besides there are things that one can't write. Look at the 'communiqués' for the 10th and the 11th : regions of Arras, Lens, and Loos."

N—— said this afternoon that the date for the great effort of the French army in Flanders was not yet fixed, for Joffre is still waiting for the British to furnish themselves with enough ammunition. But when it comes there is no doubt that it will be successful.

After the war, he said, it would be utterly impossible for any German to show his face in France ; his life would be in imminent danger, and if he were killed no French jury would condemn the slayer. He told me of an unfortunate captain's wife, whom he and his wife knew, who had been misused by Germans at the beginning of the war, and is now about to have a baby. Recently her husband, wounded, asked her to visit him at the base hospital where he is being tended, but she dared not show herself to him in the condition she is in. So N—— and his wife obtained for her a medical certificate that she was ill, and having this

excuse she can wait now until after her delivery. She has the fullest intention of destroying the child. The N——s know another married French lady, who with her daughter has taken refuge in Nice, and both of them are "enceinte" by the same filthy Hun ravisher. Such crimes are so entirely unpardonable, and they have been so numerous, that peace or no peace, says N——, should ever a German show his vile face in France again there would always be a woman with some such wrong as this to shoot him down as one would a mad dog. There is also a lady living at Antibes, known to the N——s, who has lost her husband, her three sons, and two sons-in-law, so that every day in her home six widows sit down to table. What her sentiments of vengeance must be against the nation that has made this war can be imagined, and she is not likely ever to abandon or modify them.

In the evening I met in G——'s company a young Alpine soldier, who had formerly been the cashier at the Nice Casino, and now, after months of hard fighting in the Argonne, is at the Saint Roch barracks, where his services as an accountant have been requisitioned; he wishes himself back at the front, where with more danger he would enjoy greater liberty. He confirmed the story which has reached here from several sources of the narrow escape which the Crown Prince of Germany ran of being captured near Montfaucon. The Prince, during his presence there, used to change into a different suit of clothes every day to avoid being recognised. His head-quarters had not been actually at Montfaucon, but in an adjoining village named Les Islettes. There he and his staff had been made

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welcome and comfortable by the inhabitants and by the Mayor, who subsequently connived at his escape. Patriotism, said the young Alpine soldier, had not been proof against the pride and the profit these people derived from having so distinguished a guest in their midst. In reward for their hospitable reception the Crown Prince had given strict orders, which applied to both officers and men under his command, that none of the young girls of Les Islettes were to be misused, and he had been obeyed.

This young soldier expressed the belief that in the Argonne, if nowhere else, the German positions, owing to the great extent of the forest and the extremely strong entrenchments, were practically impregnable to a frontal attack. "We could fight there," he said, "for a thousand years without being able to make any advance. The German trenches are far more elaborately constructed than ours. Their ammunition and food are brought along communication trenches, while ours come by road, and are frequently "spotted" by the enemy's guns and destroyed. Then the echoes of the vast forest, where skirmishing is constantly going on, are so confusing that we are rarely able to tell for certain from which side they come, and consequently where the fighting is, and the respective positions of friend and foe. The forest is thus dotted all over with dead, French and German all mixed up together, showing what a "mêlée" it has been, without any clear strategy or tactics on either side.

He thinks, however, that the war will certainly be over by September, but that Germany will be vanquished by financial rather than by military causes.

A very young soldier passing by just then, the ex-cashier said that the latest class to be enrolled seemed to have as yet but very little conception of what discipline meant, and he attributed this to the increasing slackness of education in the schools. They would, however, make a better showing when they reached the front, where the "fortes têtes" (the refractory ones) are got rid of with remarkable expedition.

In connection with the controversy now raging in England as to the value of the work performed by Lord Kitchener, there is a statement published to-day by some commercial body that "we would rather be wrong with Lord Kitchener than right with" a certain newspaper. This, remarked De B—— to-day, who knows England well, is characteristic of that worship of idols which has done so much harm to England in the past, a weak clinging to names and well-advertised personalities. Results, not names, matter, but in the practical Englishman there is a fund of superstitious reverence for the popular hero, which makes it difficult for him to get that obvious fact into his head. Unfortunately these idols are too often snow-men, who melt away in the first heat of an emergency, to the tragic despair of their worshippers, who thought that they would last for ever if nobody were allowed to touch them. Lord Kitchener may be everything that his admirers believe him to be, and there is no proof, so far, to the contrary, but in the commercial manifesto referred to by De B—— there is a mixture of the ostrich and of the old type of Chinese mandarin, and as a specimen of British "Kultur" it is unworthy of the nation.

## CHAPTER XVI

*Mother Eybert's pigs : What Birmingham thinks : War oratory : Nice for tuberculous patients : House and hotel speculation : The "Lanterne" of Nice : What the landlord said : Seven million Austro-Germans left to fight : French and German war methods : The Russians wearing Germans out : Melinite and black powder : Sapping tunnels : The truth about the 15th Army Corps : Vassincourt : The peasant of the Meuse : An Englishman in the French army*

May 29th.—L——, a French electrician, a genial southerner from Marseilles, who occasionally joins the sittings of the Committee of Nations, and has several relatives in the war, including a nephew, a prisoner at Königsberg, says that his nephew has succeeded in spite of the strict censorship of the prisoners' correspondence in letting him know that the food they get is wholly insufficient. The phrase he used evidently failed to attract the notice of the German authorities. He wrote : " We have nothing to complain of so far as the food is concerned, for it is in every respect equal to that which Mother Eybert furnishes to her boarders." Mother Eybert keeps pigs ! The French slang word " coco " also seems to have passed the comprehension of the German censor, for in his last letter L——'s nephew wrote : " As I have now recovered from

my wound the Germans have set me to work, but I can assure you it's no fun breaking stones with nothing in the 'coco,' " that is, with nothing to eat.

*May 30th.*—A letter from G——, who is now working at ——'s, one of the largest manufacturers in Birmingham, with a view to subsequently managing their Paris agency. He says that conscription is almost certain in England in a few days, and that his firm has already sent to the War Office a full list of its employees who are of "military age." He adds: "Although things have apparently gone up 25 per cent. since the war began, we still find things a good deal cheaper than in Paris. I was awfully sorry to hear that poor old D—— had been killed. He lunched with us at Duval's when he was on his way up to Dixmude, and was very cheery."

*May 31st.*—J. H—— is making a collection of some of the more remarkable, including also some of the more ridiculous, outbursts of oratory which the war has provoked in the rhetorical Midi. We laughed heartily over some of them. The mania of so many public officials to be "literary" has unfortunately been aggravated rather than calmed by the grim realities of warfare. Verlaine's advice in his *Ars Poetica*, "de l'Eloquence il faut tordre le cou," has been woefully neglected, and H—— maintained that the best speech since the war began was that made by Lord Charles Beresford to the French soldiers in the Argonne, which he promised them should be a short one: "Je vous ai vus : ô les pauvres Boches !"

There is an article to-day in one of the Nice daily papers in favour of converting Nice into a hospital station for tuberculous patients. According to H—— there is behind this proposal a scheme on the part of a body of local speculators to intensify the decline in the value of house property in Nice resulting from various causes connected with the war, with the view of subsequently making large purchases at “knock-out” prices. Huge profits would then be made when prosperity returned to the town after the conclusion of the war. This speculation in cities, just as if they were so much stock, and equally subject to bulling and bearing manœuvres, is a curious phenomenon. H—— says that the great fortunes in Nice have always been made as the result of some exceptional crisis in its history. The last of these was the violent earthquake, some twenty-five years ago, which entailed a collapse in the value of house property of which the cunning money-hoarding Niçois were prompt to take advantage. They were thus able to purchase for cash property at 10 per cent. of its real value—a value which was quickly regained as soon as the panic was over. It was with a similar aim in view that the notables of Nice had manœuvred for all the largest and most expensive hotels in Nice to be converted into military hospitals, knowing full well that a long time must elapse before the previous customers of these establishments, willing to pay very high prices for the most luxurious accommodation, but repelled by their too recent association with suffering and disease, would be willing to return to them. In the meanwhile these hotels would be forced into the market and sold for any-



thing they would fetch. It is certainly curious that only the first-class hotels, which owing to the manifold inconveniences of their many stories and distant kitchens, already pointed out to me by General X——, and ill-adapted for hospitals, should alone have been selected for the purpose, the smaller second-class and third-class, which would have been more suitable in every way, having been entirely passed over. Wealthy Niçois, says H——, have been hoarding gold since the war began, and buying Government bonds with it at 4 per cent., which are redeemable in three months' time, when this capital will again be at its owner's disposition for the speculation in house and hotel property which he describes.

No doubt some mild astonishment is excusable when a local paper, after first of all describing the fearful spread of the tuberculosis contagion in various parts of France traceable to soldiers who have brought it back with them from the front, should then proceed to recommend Nice as the most proper place in which to receive and treat this disease, for apart from the purely selfish, and, if need be, negligible shyness of the rich visitor class, who make the fortunes of the hotel proprietors, the climate of Nice is universally known to be only suitable for those who have very strong and sound lungs. To ascribe the strange proposal to ignorance of local conditions or to sheer stupidity is to take too indulgent a view of our poor human nature.

Count de H——, our Swiss Delegate, and I lunched together at the "Lanterne." This is certainly the point from which the most picturesque view of Nice and the Mediterranean is to be obtained.

One is reminded of the Bay of Naples, with an element of superior gracefulness and more perfect harmony, due to the admirable succession of planes produced by the meeting and receding lines of the Alps as they bend towards the sea. The war, too, has rendered to Nice an even greater peacefulness than is usual at this season, so that we had the place entirely to ourselves. The landlord, a quick-witted, voluble native, had just returned from nine months at the front, invalided by varicose veins and general debility. Otherwise he looked the picture of health. He had been a non-commissioned officer in an engineer regiment. "Oh, it will be a long business," he said, when we asked him his opinion as to the duration of the war. "The Germans are so marvellously well entrenched. We have given them the time to do it. We could not help it. We had not enough men or ammunition to follow up our first success on the Marne with sufficient promptitude. They must have at least another seven million men left—the Germans and the Austrians together—while we never had more than four million and a half, and with that we have had to hold the entire Western line. And the Germans still throw away men recklessly. And they fight bravely, very bravely: in a sense, I would say more bravely than we. For you see our officers leave us a good deal of initiative. The French soldier can fight without his officer being at his side, or in front of him, or immediately behind him to push him forward. The French officer says to his men: 'There is a particular position yonder which must be taken. Go and take it.' There are no special orders to go this way or that; but simply

'Débrouillez-vous.' Take it your own way. Make the best job you can of it. So the French soldiers start off in loose formation, and each exercises his own intelligence, and thinks out for himself the best way to utilise his own capacities and to aid his comrades. 'Il se débrouille.' Then if the position turns out to be so strong that the attack on it can only result in useless loss of life, the officer whistles his men back, and again in their retreat 'ils se débrouillent.' Each man gets back as best he can. In this way the loss is comparatively small. But with the Germans, if a position is to be taken, the order is issued to a detachment to attack forthwith, and the men go forward as if on parade, blindly as it were, indifferently as one might think, to their death, mown down by our mitrailleuses, and when none of them are left there is another detachment, and another, and yet another of equal strength to take their place. This passive courage is something quite foreign to the emotional French nature."

"Surely this must lead to a gradual reduction of the disparity in numbers between the French and the Germans?"

"Only very slowly. It is the Russians who are wearing out the German strength. By their method of enticing the Germans on, and then falling on them when they imagine they have won an important advantage, the Russians are causing the Germans enormous losses not only in men but in material. For, of course, the advancing army is followed by all its supply services, and you probably have no conception of what that means for an army of 250,000 men. Why, from here to right across there on the other side

of Nice you would not be able to pass on account of the encumberment and the crush. So when the army is forced back, all this huge trail, several miles long, of carts and horses and automobiles, is thrown into an inconceivable confusion and entanglement. These tactics, however, are very costly to the Russians, in men especially. Luckily they can afford it, but we couldn't. Two or three feints of that kind and we should have no army left."

This engineer expatiated on the superiority of the French over the German high explosive. The Germans, he said, had nothing that could compare with the French melinite for its terrible concussionary force. He had often seen German soldiers killed in the trenches by melinite bombs thrown by rackets. They had no externally apparent wound, but when they were lifted up the muscles were found to be detached from the bones, and their stomachs fell forwards or sideways, being no longer retained by the peritoneum. No such results as these from the German bombs had been reported in the French lines.

For mining and blowing up the trenches not melinite, however, but ordinary black powder was used, sometimes six to eight thousand kilos at a time, for the striking force of melinite was too sudden, and spent itself before the necessary uplifting result had been achieved. Black powder, on the other hand, had a fusing duration of one to two minutes. The sapping tunnels were, as a rule, not more than eighty centimetres in diameter, just sufficient to allow the passage of one man's shoulders. These tunnels would sometimes be a couple of miles in

length, and then oxygen had to be pumped into them to enable the sapper to breathe.

M. Rémy, for such was this young non-commissioned engineer officer's name, was enthusiastic in praise of General Joffre, who, he considered, had saved France by the firm stand he made against the then existing Ministry just after the war began. It was the fault of the French Government, and of the Governments that had preceded it, that the French army had gone to war wholly unprepared while the enemy was lacking in nothing. This was the explanation of the incident that had taken place in connection with the 15th Army Corps, largely recruited from Nice, Antibes, and Marseilles. An accusation of cowardice had been brought against this corps, which furthermore reflected on the entire population of the South of France, by a Senator Gervais, with the connivance of the then Minister of War, M. Messimy. It referred to the conduct of the corps in Lorraine in the early days of the war. What had really happened was that the 15th Army Corps had been ordered to advance against three German army corps, perfectly equipped, without having any cartridges to put in their rifles, and this after having cheerfully gone without food for forty-eight hours, owing to the lack of all commissariat arrangements. Already somewhat demoralised by hunger and thirst when the order came that they were to advance against heavy artillery and rifle fire with no arms but their bayonets, they refused to obey, and they did this with the consent of their own officers. They did not surrender: they retreated, but then a deplorable thing happened: some of the men raised the

butts of their rifles in the air, which in the French army is a sign of revolt, and shouted "Down with France! Down with 'la patrie'!" That was most reprehensible, but though there were a good few who acted thus, there was nothing of a general movement. However, it was made the excuse by the then Minister of War for the public accusation of cowardice against the 15th Army Corps, and for a very severe punishment of the delinquents. "I know what I am talking about," said M. R——, "for I was in the 15th Corps myself."

Describing the Battle of Vassincourt, near Bar-le-Duc, in which the 15th Army Corps subsequently covered itself with glory, and where poor young Gustave Rousset, the Countess's nephew, was killed, the engineer said that it had cost the French at least 12,000 men, and this again was to be attributed to the gross ignorance of M. Messimy, the Minister of War, which he shared with his predecessors in the same office, as to the German methods of warfare. A proper service of espionage, and a well-organised Intelligence Department might have enlightened them. But they were quite uninformed as to the progress which the science and the art of waging war had made in Germany. The French had taken Vassincourt from the Germans at the point of the bayonet. For the protection of Bar-le-Duc it was a most important position. But after they had installed themselves in the village, all the roads leading to it for some kilometres around and every house and barn capable of sheltering a soldier were blown sky-high by German mines! Seven hundred men were buried alive in the barracks alone, and though the engineers worked like mad to release

them they were only able to disinter their dead bodies, and finally received the order to leave them buried as they were, when there was no further possibility of any of them being alive.

Obviously if any of the inhabitants of Vassincourt had been in touch with the French Intelligence Department, they could have given timely warning that the Germans had mined the village. But all their spying seemed to be on behalf of the enemy, and M. R—— confirmed what I have already so often heard from those who have come back from fighting on the Lorraine and Alsatian frontiers that the number of traitors among the native populations there surpasses all belief. Oddly enough the "gendarmerie" is accused of having furnished some of the worst offenders. At Nancy, for instance, the brigadier of the "gendarmerie," who had enjoyed an exceptionally high reputation for honesty and intelligence, was caught in the act of signalling to the enemy, and is now undergoing penal servitude for life.

According to the landlord of the "Lanterne," the Meusien peasants were openly hostile to the French soldiers, and even had the insolence to tell them sometimes: "We have no food for you. What we have got is for the Germans." Numbers were shot in consequence of this, much apparently to their astonishment, for they seemed to be bereft of all moral consciousness. Traitors and spies were particularly numerous among the local "curés" and schoolmasters, who used all sorts of devices for signalling to the enemy, such as turning the hands of the church clock to preconcerted positions, or opening or closing a window-shutter. However,

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these defections were not confined to the Meuse. The Mayor of Soissons had turned out to be a traitor—a telephone communicating with the German lines was discovered in his cellar, and he was shot. It was a firing-party composed of M. R——'s comrades in the engineers that had carried out the execution. And so rampant was this treason in the Argonne and on the frontier generally that General Joffre had been obliged to evacuate all the frontier towns of their native populations, and of these a goodly portion are among the refugees who are being entertained in Nice and in the South. At Verdun only 1800 inhabitants are now left. "These Meusiens," summed up our engineer, "are really a vile lot. I can conceive no explanation for their conduct. But one thing is certain, that if the Germans had not made the egregious mistake of trying to enter France through Belgium, instead of concentrating their attack on the Meusienne frontier, France, owing to her lack of preparation, would have been overwhelmed." Even then it was a miracle that she should have had so splendid a general as General Joffre to conduct the defence, for there was no other general to compare with him. To this piece of luck, coupled with the unexpected resistance of Belgium, France owed her salvation. The Germans had no doubt whatever in their own minds that they would win, and win quickly, and then the whole of France would become their prey. This was the booty they were after, and it was a curious fact that so many of the German soldiers seemed to have brought all their capital from Germany with them, as if they did not expect to return. On countless bodies of dead Germau



soldiers that the sappers and engineers stripped before burying, soldiers who evidently belonged to the commonest of the peasant class, sums of money in German gold from five hundred to a thousand marks had been found, and these, of course, were taken possession of by the French State Treasury. On the bodies of German officers gold was also generally found, but mostly in French money.

*June 2nd.*—There is a young Englishman on sick leave here who is in the French army, one of his parents having been, like himself, born in France, which enabled him to "opt" for French nationality. He has been fighting at Les Eparges. He holds, as M. Rémy did, that with their present supply of ammunition the French can beat the Germans when they like. He was in the Battle of the Marne, and declares that if it had not been for the lack of ammunition, especially for guns exceeding the range of the 75, the French could then and there have driven the Germans out of France. For obviously the Germans also were lacking in ammunition. Some of the French batteries had only two or three shells left, and there was no means of getting more. This confirms the information which reached the Committee of Nations at the time, and was duly noted in the first instalment of this Diary. This young soldier of pure English blood fighting as a Frenchman laid the blame for this state of affairs on the French politicians. He had been fighting in the neighbourhood of Verdun, and his description of the treatment which the French soldiers received from the local inhabitants differs a good deal from the reports which have reached

me from French sources—puts the conduct of the peasantry in a somewhat more favourable light, and may explain away some of the grumbling. Moreover, it is characteristic of the British mind to take this indulgent point of view. "In districts which had never been the centres of manœuvres, and where soldiers were an unfamiliar sight, we were received," he said, "with the utmost hospitality and the warmest welcome, but in the neighbourhood of forts, where manœuvres have been constantly going on for years past, the inhabitants are fed up with soldiers, and sick at the sight of them, and they act accordingly."

He said that very little quarter was given on either side, and practically only to troops who surrendered in a body, though an occasional officer might be spared for the useful information that he might be able to furnish. Generally speaking, the prisoners were in a dazed state for three or four days after their capture, and during this period "were like lambs." The atrocities committed by the Germans was the principal reason for very little quarter being given to them. It is highly satisfactory to be able to record that this is so. Our engineer friend, the landlord of the "Lanterne," had also made this plain in the talk I had with him yesterday. "What the enemy did to us soldiers," he said, "would not have made us feel particularly vengeful. War is war. But when once you have seen some poor little inoffensive child whose hands have been cut off by those Prussian villains, and you are the father of a family, or merely an ordinary decent human being, you've not much pity for them afterwards."

## CHAPTER XVII

*Camille Pelletan : A dynamiter : Carving up the French navy : An English opinion : Conditions of French prisoners in Germany : The truth about "turpinite" : Jack S—— killed at the Dardanelles : An Anglo-French education : "Be English!" : Ready in the hour of need : Clemenceau's anti-patriotic campaign : Spanish feeling about the war : Carlist Anglophobia : News from the front*

*June 5th.*—The death is announced of Camille Pelletan, whose chief claim to remembrance will, I fear, be that he was the French statesman who, when Minister of Marine, succeeded in reducing the French navy from the second to the fourth place in the navies of the world. A more fantastic figure of a Minister it would be difficult to conceive. No one like him has ministered at the Council Board of France since the Revolution, and it is sincerely to be hoped that his like may never be seen again. Without being either a Socialist, or an Anarchist, or a doctrinaire attached to any particular political sect, though he called himself a Radical, which means anything or nothing, as we know too well in England, he was an Extremist of the most dangerous type. Perhaps the best designation of him would be a "dynamiter," using the word in its purely moral, political, and iconoclastic sense.

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A thoroughly good chap, a born Bohemian, an "intellectuel," with a genius for research and a brilliant style, he was afflicted with the mania for destruction. Institutions and reputations were what he could not tolerate the existence of. It was not jealousy or envy that made him like this, it was the kink that his brain was born with. He was by nature, by a sort of warped sense of generosity, which is really a phase of megalomania, passionately on the side of inferiority wherever it was to be found. There are many Englishmen like him, eager for the "littl'un" to win against impossible odds, and superstitiously believing that by some miracle he will win, and that he deserves to win because he is the "littl'un," though he may be the greatest rascal unhung. This prejudice caused Pelletan to champion everything that was little against everything that was big, to make him seek to pull everything and everybody that was on top to a level as near as possible to the bottom. It incidentally inspired him to substitute destroyers for battleships, and to uphold the idea that the submarine was destined to achieve the mastery of the seas.

His chief henchman, his "eminence grise," his guide, philosopher, and boon companion was a certain Lieutenant T——, whom he appointed to be his "chef de cabinet" at the Ministry of Marine. T—— was without rival the most intrepid absinthe drinker I have ever come across in Paris, surpassing in this form of prowess even the hirsute Camille himself, who took a lot of beating. Every morning this little man T—— could be found seated at a café on the boulevard, his small green eyes blazing like white-hot steel points with the absinthe fire

that was behind them, surrounded by a mob of Bohemians, similar to himself, to whom he related with glee the manner in which he and the approving Camille were "carving up" the French admirals, and with them incidentally, of course, the French navy. He also called this operation "breaking up the chapel." For the anti-clerical Pelletan, with the peculiar superstitiousness of the unsuperstitious, detected a clerical cut in every general officer's uniform, and in none more pronouncedly than in those of the French admirals. In the minds of Camille Pelletan and his Sancho Panza, Lieutenant T——, all the admirals of France constituted a chapel of disaffection and anti-republicanism, which was a danger to the State and needed to be suppressed just as if it were an ordinary religious congregation. Thus any admiral suspected of having a religious belief was promptly and unceremoniously turned out of the Navy, without any reference whatever to his past services or his capacities. Such a scandal did this become that when one of these distinguished admirals—it was Admiral Bienaimé, if I remember rightly—received while in command of a foreign station the notice of his summary dismissal, the English admiral, stationed close by, paid him a formal visit to express his sympathy and condolence. This was a most irregular thing to do, and the French Admiralty could well have complained of it, but Pelletan wisely refrained.

Camille Pelletan's instinctive hatred for all chiefs was specially well seconded by Lieutenant T——, who, having risen from the ranks, had many an old score to pay off against his former superiors.

Pelletan inaugurated the system, since imitated by a worthy emulator at the British Admiralty, of taking pleasure trips with his wife and family on French warships at the expense of the State. He made speeches at the naval arsenals which encouraged the workmen to strike—a lesson since learned in England—and went so far on one occasion that M. Combes, the Prime Minister, invented in excuse for him that phrase which has passed into the French language as a household word, “*la chaleur communicative des banquets*” (the communicative warmth of banquets).

His apologists in the Radical party are now seeking to prove that the lessons of the present naval war corroborate Pelletan's policy when Minister of War, which was to neglect the construction of big battleships with the heaviest possible armament in favour of light cruisers and submarines. He himself, shortly before his death, published an article in which he tried to demonstrate that his policy had been right. One inevitable deduction from these arguments is that the British naval system is wrong, and to back up that theory it is necessary to magnify the German naval effort at the expense of the British, and to deny that the British Navy has retained the mastery of the seas, or has been of any particular assistance in the present war. This is not the opinion, however, of any experts outside of Germany and the narrow circle of M. Camille Pelletan's admirers, whose pleadings end by leading them into an ungenerous and anti-patriotic denial of the skill, activity, and strength of their own ally.

*June 11th.*—To-night a letter from M. G——, who a short time ago left Paris for Birmingham to take up an important post with one of the largest manufacturers there. He writes: "As a matter of fact there is no doubt that a certain number of mistakes have been made here, but all things considered the showing is truly wonderful. There is absolutely no doubt that we have more men than we can properly equip, and I have come across loads of fellows fully trained who are still in blue uniforms for lack of khaki. All the new fellows look fine, and as hard as nails. As for the ammunition, they have done pretty well too, considering England supplies not only her army but the Belgians, the Serbs, and the Russians to a great extent, also the French largely, and I know for a fact that certain parts of the famous 75 are made here. They are certainly going to have more than double the output now, and Lloyd George's two fine speeches at Manchester and Liverpool have had a rousing effect especially among the working classes. Here they have started plant for making poisonous gas on a large scale, and I hope they will choke a lot of those —— of Germans. . . ." This is a very encouraging letter, and knowing the keen intelligence of the writer and his perfect acquaintance with France—he is half French—I feel, as does the Committee of Nations, to which I have submitted it, refreshed and illuminated by its tenor, and above all more hopeful.

Our electrical engineer friend, M. P——, who hails from Marseilles and frequently aids us with his scientific knowledge, which is encyclopædic, has, as I have already related, a nephew who is a prisoner

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at Königsberg. The nephew has managed to secretly convey to his uncle the information that with the safe arrival of the packages of provisions which he sent him the situation of the prisoners has materially improved. This shows that previously they were underfed. But he complains that the French prisoners are made to sleep in sheds which are contiguous to those where the Russian prisoners are confined, with the result that they have been overwhelmed with vermin. It appears that the unfortunate Russians are in a terrible state of personal neglect and physical distress. Large quantities of vermin powder which M. P—— dispatched to his nephew on the receipt of these details has, however, been confiscated for the general benefit of all the prisoners, so that its effect has been negligible. The prisoners are allowed a collective shower-bath once a fortnight, and an individual hot bath once a month, which, in view of the contagious propinquity of the poor Russians, is quite insufficient.

M. P—— is in touch with the chemical experts who are engaged in the French arsenals in the preparation of the high-explosive shells. "What is this famous 'turpinite,'" I asked him, "of which we have heard so much and seen so little?" "That is simple enough," was the prompt reply. "'Turpinite' does not exist! Constant experiments are being made with new formulas for high explosives, but nothing has yet been found to take the place of melinite, though modifications of melinite have been tried, all of which have a vital drawback." Thus is set to rest finally, it is to be hoped, the great "turpinite" superstition



which has been haunting us ever since the war began.

*June 13th.*—I was shocked to see in the casualty list published to-day in an Anglo-Parisian paper the name of Jack S——, killed, as a reserve lieutenant of the British Navy, at the Dardanelles. I have written a letter of condolence to the poor mother, my old original-minded, artistic, lovable friend of years ago. What memories these losses bring back! What an awful past month it has been! Each Sunday that I have opened the paper on its arrival in the afternoon a name, a line—and another chapter of one's past life violently torn out! Jack too! What a fine lad he was. Born in India, speaking Hindustani and French as well as English, educated at the Naval School at Toulon, then at the École de l'Electricité in Paris, he was almost more French than English. And I feel in a way half responsible for his death. For when his mother, embittered by all sorts of misfortunes and injustices befallen to her in England, conceived a dislike for the English and all their works and wanted Jack to give up England and make his career in France, he asked me in Paris what I thought about it, and I said: "No, Jack, *be English*. It's the best thing in the world to be when it's properly done, though it takes some doing. The finest boy in the world is the English boy, the best man in the world the Englishman when he is true to England and to himself. There are lots who are not, many too many in fact, and they grow more numerous every year, but they are the exceptions and the rule holds good, and the

word 'England' still shines and sounds more splendidly than the name of any other country in the world that ever was or will be. You have all the making, Jack, of the best type of English lad. You owe yourself to England. She will need you one of these days." And Jack followed this foolish advice, and often expressed himself grateful for it afterwards. And I, too, do not regret it, for England did need him and France too, and he was there in the hour of their need.

*June 14th.*—The rumours that a general movement in the direction of peace is in the air are gathering consistency, though I am convinced that they are untrue. What has happened is this. M. Clemenceau has recently been carrying on a most violent campaign in his paper *L'Homme Enchaîné* against the so-called "embusqué," or shirker. Every man, according to M. Clemenceau, who is not in the fighting-line is a skulker who is evading his duty, thanks to his own influence with the authorities or that of his friends. The question has recently been thrashed out in the French Chamber, and the fact amply demonstrated that M. Clemenceau's theory is almost wholly false, and that the valid men who are employed away from the actual theatre of war are indispensably needed to carry on the administrative affairs of the country, the postal service, and so forth, and to co-operate in the production of munitions. Some shirkers may be amongst them, but absolute control in this matter is clearly an impossibility, and their number certainly does not justify M. Clemenceau's campaign. But the explanations furnished by the Government

have not disarmed M. Clemenceau. His attacks have become all the more virulent, with the result that the "moral" of the men in the trenches who read his paper is being, it is said, seriously affected. They are beginning to murmur against what they are led by M. Clemenceau to look upon as unfair treatment. This accounts for a fear which is growing up in Paris that unless some vigorous antidote is administered, M. Clemenceau's poison may so act upon the minds of the lower class, always willing to believe that its interests are sacrificed in favour of "les fils à papa," as to provoke a public outburst.

That is what M. Clemenceau is clearly trying to bring about. But it is probable that he has mistaken (he is getting old) the true temper of the people. The war has introduced great, and perhaps permanent, changes into the national character. The last deciding word in vital questions of French politics for some time to come will be with the men who have fought. The sword will prove itself once more to be mightier (as indeed it always was) than the pen. The soldiers who have been at the front know the cheapness of life, the superiority of death for an ideal to life with the betrayal of an ideal. They will arrange things as they please, as they think proper. No smart and dirty politicians will dominate them. They will have the undisputed "pas" of all those whose hearts are not as high, and whose hands are not as clean as their own. And woe to the French statesman of the old school who still thinks that he is dealing with voters of the old type. J. H—— assured me to-day that he, in common with many others, was absolutely

decided to shoot down as enemies and traitors to their country any French statesman who should put his hand to a treaty of peace with Germany which did not involve the final crushing of German militarism. He has even made certain dispositions in his will in view of his finding himself forced to accomplish this vow.

Our Diplomatic Delegate, Comte des G——, has just returned from Spain, and he reports to the International Committee of Public Safety, whose head-quarters are in Nice, that, with the exception of the populace, which is indifferent, and the King, who is Francophile, every one in Spain is intensely Germanophile. The Germanophile animus is so high that the Queen of Spain is generally referred to contemptuously in Court, military, and especially clerical circles as the "Englishwoman," just as Marie Antoinette was called the "Austrian" in the days of bitter hatred against her which heralded the Revolution. The King is credited with having said that only he and the "canaille" were on the side of the Allies, but fortunately they were in the majority. The fact that the Queen is a great deal more German than English matters no more to these dear Spaniards than does a scrap of paper to their friend Bethmann-Hollweg. As our Spanish Delegate, the Marquis de B——, remarked mournfully to-day (he does not share the Spanish clerical view), so many diplomatic and political blunders are caused by a lack of *exactitude*. His friend, the Marquis de S——, who is a Carlist though an anti-clerical, and one of the most intimate friends and advisers of Don Jaime, the Carlist Pretender to the Spanish throne, told us, with regret, that the

Francophobe and Anglophobe feeling in Spain was almost entirely the work of the Catholic priests. They told the people that France was delivered over to Atheists and Freemasons, while England, the Protestant country "par excellence," had sympathised with the United States when it robbed Spain of her colonies.

*June 15th.*—The Countess has at last received news of her son. His letter alarms her a good deal, for it is strangely incoherent, which is unlike Roger, and he complains of being very fatigued.

I have news from Comte J. de B——. He is resting for four days at a distance of twenty kilometres from the first line of trenches, for which he and his comrades are specially grateful "after the evil days passed in the woods."

## CHAPTER XVIII

*The Chinese Emperor and Wagner : Wagnerian music identical with negro music : Catulle Mendès : Wagner and the Paris lunatic asylums : A truthful German criticism : A southern French editor's opinion of England : What the English cabinet-maker in Nice thought of the war : France supplying wheat to Germany through Switzerland : German thefts at Roubaix : René N—— dangerously wounded : Encouraging letter from the front : Nice patriotism : A French criticism of the Italian campaign*

June 16th.—Following upon the views already expressed in these pages on the subject of the Wagnerian trash against which there has been so healthy a reaction in France for some time past, J. H——, whose experience as an explorer in Africa, combined with his scientific attainments, makes him an indisputable authority on the subject, pointed out to-day that the music of Wagner is identical with negro music. It exercises its power of impression along exactly the same lines, being an appeal to the lowest form of animal sensuality through the medium of nerves degenerated and neuroticised by every form of vicious indulgence to the point of hysteria, and to the verge, and even beyond the border-line, of insanity. The great prophet of Wagner's music, the man who most

contributed to make it fashionable in France, was Catulle Mendès, whose neurasthenia, the result of habitual indulgence in every kind of sensual dissipation, morphia, opium, absinthe, and the rest—a fact which he himself was the first to proclaim and glory in—was excited and satisfied by the music of Wagner to an extent which Mendès alone was capable of describing. Wagner's leitmotifs are exactly similar to the constant repetition of the note of the gong in negro music, and to the fixed or recurrent idea in the brain of a drunkard or a lunatic. In this connection J. H—— recounted a curious anecdote. Some years ago, on the occasion of a visit to Pekin, he was requested to prescribe for the late Emperor of China, a distinction which had not previously been conferred upon any European physician. The youthful Emperor was suffering from an extremely weakening complaint, an access of which was invariably brought on *whenever a gong was sounded*. The fact was that for reasons mainly of state-craft, for which the old Empress was responsible, the Emperor had been deliberately reduced to a degree of neurasthenia, which made him physically sensitive in a morbid degree to just those noises which form the basis of negro music, and of which Wagner made such a subtle use. J. H—— prescribed cold douches, but, and this is the most singular feature of the story, the Chinese medical men, ascribing the malady to the work of devils, tried to drive them away by a horrible concatenation of Chinese musical instruments, including many gongs, which produced a Wagnerian effect such as Wagner in his most inspired moments would have envied. The effect

on the Imperial patient was all the more deplorable, inasmuch as the remedy was worse than the disease, and was in fact a magnified form of what invariably provoked it.

J. H—— further expressed the belief that Wagner, who had made an elaborate study of the effect of music on the patients in the Paris lunatic asylums, must have known of the rapid increase which has been taking place for some generations past in the number of the insane, and being essentially commercially minded, he had carefully borne this in mind when elaborating his musical methods.

*June 18th.*—A writer in one of the halfpenny London dailies registers a remark made to him by a German, which is quite unusually true and to the point. "You, the English," said the German, "invariably see an absurdity in a novelty until the novelty becomes an institution." And he might have added, "And once it has passed into an institution you think it bad manners and almost wicked to criticise it."

*June 20th.*—I called on the N——s this afternoon. N——, whom I found at home, seemed depressed. Events in England are arousing a good deal of pessimism here, and it is difficult to find much to say that can contend against it. "One is forced to the conclusion," said N——, "that you English think of nothing but making money, and that idea is gaining ground in France. You are the greatest people on earth and you could have done anything you liked, and the long and short of it is that you have done practically nothing. You are, or were,



the people most perfectly organised industrially in the world—poor old France had no industries at all a hundred years ago—and yet you can't manufacture enough ammunition for your own Army, small as it is. Your Government is so contemptibly inefficient as a Government that it actually sends groups of workmen to the front to find out for themselves whether there is a lack of ammunition or not, and on their report the fate of the British Empire is made to depend by self-styled statesmen who are paid to govern. You are in the same position, or rather worse, than we were in 1870, cursed by the ignorant self-interested demagogues, raised to power by the working classes in reward for preaching to them that their individual profit and concerns are superior to all national considerations. Then look at your diplomatists. Surely if Great Britain had been at the height of her great diplomatic traditions she could have induced the minor States, Bulgaria, Roumania, and Greece, to join the Triple Entente. No, she has suffered herself to be beaten there too. She has not even managed to exercise the smallest effective influence on the United States. As it is, the military operations are practically at a standstill, waiting for the result of the diplomatic negotiations. In Paris they are saying, Why lose unnecessarily a number of men if the adhesion of the small States is going to make the solution of the war less costly and bring it closer? But as far as one can judge the only result of the efforts of your diplomatists has been to throw Bulgaria, Roumania, and Greece into the arms of Germany and Turkey.

“There is no doubt that France will get dis-

couraged if she is made to feel that England is not putting forth her full strength to help, or showing equal willingness to accept the burdens of the war. There are plenty of people in France only too eager to seek an occasion for sowing discouragement and spreading dissatisfaction. Here in Nice the priests are preaching that France is being punished for her persecution of the Church, that the hand of God is against her, that so long as she tolerates an atheistic Government she cannot be expected to win. And you know what a superstitious population we have in Nice. . . .

"As far as we can see," continued N—— after a pause, "the only classes in England that have 'donné' [come forward] are the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, who have sacrificed their lives freely ['donné leur sang sans compter'], while as for the working classes—'ces cochons-là'—they think of nothing but earning money. 'Tenez!' I know an English cabinet-maker here, whom I met in the street a few days ago, and he told me that he was leaving Nice. 'To fight for your country?' I asked. 'I have three sons at the front.' 'Gracious, no!' was the English cabinet-maker's reply, 'to earn money! You've no idea. The English workman to-day, *thanks to the war*, earns what he likes. There never was such a glorious time!' 'And if conscription is introduced, what will you do then?' 'Oh, then I shall skip back,' answered the English cabinet-maker with a knowing look."

On my way back home I stopped to drink a glass of white wine in the pleasant shade of the boulevard trees at Auda's. Madame Auda, who gets a letter

from her husband every day, says that he is still in the Department of the Seine-et-Marne, just to the north of Melun, and that the heat there is dreadful, far greater than is ever experienced at Nice, reaching  $42^{\circ}$  C. in the shade. He and his comrades are ten kilometres from the nearest village, which by reason of this distance and the overpowering heat they are not allowed to visit, so that they are bored to death. They do not complain of the food, but wine is not supplied to them, cider being substituted, with the result that they have all become very thin. As Auda was over-stout when he left Nice, he does not know whether to be pleased or frightened at this loss of corpulence. All around where they are encamped extend vast plains entirely given over to wheat culture, and dotted over with flour-mills. Wheat has been so abundant that the mills have not yet finished grinding all last year's crop.

Later in the day I heard in connection with this wheat crop that France, without knowing it or being able to help it, has been supplying large quantities of wheat to Germany through Switzerland. The Swiss, as a rule, purchase most of their wheat from France, but this year they have purchased much larger quantities than usual at big prices, and there is no doubt that the difference has been furnished to the Germans. It appears to be practically impossible to prevent this, except by forbidding all export of French wheat to neutral countries, which would be very difficult. Another trick that the Germans are playing off on the French is connected with the trade in woollen goods. The Germans, when they invaded the North of France,

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stole, particularly from Roubaix, 300,000,000 francs' worth of wool. They have now converted this wool into cloth in the captured French factories, and through Switzerland are selling it back in the manufactured form to the French. As the French are suffering from a wool famine, and need woollen cloth for their soldiers' uniforms, they are obliged to go through this German mill *via* the Swiss intermediaries, and pay the extravagant price demanded.

*June 22nd.*—René N—— has been wounded, shot through the head, so I learned from his father to-day, but he has been able to write home that his life is not in danger. He is such a courageous little devil that this wound, by temporarily putting him out of action, may be the saving of his life.

*June 23rd.*—There is fairly good news of René N—— to-day. A German bullet went through both cheeks, and smashed both the right and left maxillary bones. "This will spoil my physical attractions," he writes jocularly to his father, "but will not prevent me, I hope, from getting rapidly well, and having another pot at the Boches in the front line before long." He saw the Boche who shot him in the act of aiming, and instinctively turned his head, thereby saving his life.

A very encouraging letter reached me to-day from L——. He writes: "We are still in the neighbourhood of Arras, at Neuville-St.-Vaast. You must have read in the 'communiqués' the marvellous results that we have obtained, thanks to the bravery of the infantry and the artillery. I am very happy to be among the latter. Our battery has been

mentioned in the regimental order of the day, and I am very proud of it. The struggle is going to begin over again, even more hotly than before, and we hope to achieve the best results, that is to say, to chase the Boches out of our beautiful France, and this with the aid of our brothers-in-arms and friends, the English: we fight very often side by side. We are sure of the final victory, which will not tarry much longer now. . . . It is now several days since we have had any sleep; we fire without ceasing on the dirty Boches ['les salauds de Boches'], who are only separated from us by 1100 metres. I wish you could be close to me to see the losses that we inflict upon them. Everywhere it is nothing but corpses. My health is perfect." And this soldier signs his name with a vigour and flourish which was less noticeable in his previous letters.

*June 24th.*—A post card from young I——, whose name was mentioned in this Diary last winter, and who is now with a heavy artillery battery in the neighbourhood of Arras, close to where L—— is also stationed, confirms L——'s last letter in its most important particulars. I—— says that the French artillery is performing wonders and is infinitely superior to the German. He foresees an early solution to the war in the "débâcle" of the Germans, and coming from I—— this is specially interesting, for when he was in Nice before going to the front he was consistently pessimistic.

*June 25th to 30th.*—The greengrocer's wife has made this remark to my landlady: "La patrie, pour moi, c'est lorsque j'ai la caisse pleine." This

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is a shocking specimen of a mental attitude rather too common in the Midi. It explains the accusation made against the Niçois that they are not as patriotic as they should be. Fortunately there are many Niçois who do not share in such ideas.

There is a generally expressed opinion among aviation experts here that Lieutenant Warneford's death was not accidental, but was due to his machine having been tampered with. On this question of "sabotage," prompted by German agents, we learn that what prevented the general advance of the Allies in the West a few months ago was an error of calibration, which resulted in 400,000 shells reaching the front which were not fitted to the guns.

In the *Revue Bleue* M. Jean Finot recommends the hanging of the German Emperor as the only punishment suitable to his crimes, and he quotes the famous case of General Haynau, the Austrian monster, who so narrowly escaped being lynched at the hands of some London brewers' men in the middle of the last century. It is interesting to note that the necessity for making a serious example of the German Emperor is at any rate earning wide and authoritative acceptance in France, whatever may be the case in England. There is a fine mid-Victorian savour about the action of those brave brewers' men of sixty years ago which is lacking to the atmosphere of modern London.

A very large contingent of French cavalry is stationed at Arras in view of important action in the near future. This information reaches Nice from more than one source, which can be entirely relied on. At the same time a strange rumour is being spread about, which apparently brings convic-

tion with it to quite a number of people, that peace is in sight. It is just one of those impressions which strike the masses all of a sudden, and without any definable reason. The wish, no doubt, is father to the thought. Probably the increasing tightness of money is one of its causes.

René N—— has now two "citations" in the orders of the day to his credit, which win for him the War Cross with a star.

*July 1st.*—The general deadlock continues. A letter reached me from J. de B——, who has been partially buried by a "marmite" in a bayonet charge, while his sergeant and two comrades were killed at his side. He is back at the ambulance recovering from the shock.

*July 2nd to 4th.*—The general impression here is that the situation is becoming rather grave. This pessimism is attributable no doubt to the continued inaction of the Allies on the Western front, and to the confused state of politics in Great Britain.

*July 5th.*—There has been another staggering incident at the front, which recalls the scandal connected with the 15th Corps in August last. This time it is the 17th Army Corps, whose depot is at Toulouse, where it is mainly recruited, that is accused of having turned tail in the presence of the enemy. The information comes from a source which leaves no doubt as to its accuracy. The corps was subsequently decimated by French troops, as many as 800 being shot. It is certainly unfortu-

nate for the reputation of the Midi that such a thing should have happened again.

*July 6th.*—C——, the English pharmacist in the Rue de la Paix, whom I had not seen since the war began, told me to-day that his son, who is in the French army, is wounded, after having been seven months in the trenches. He gave me one curious detail, that at the beginning of the war the French troops made some most extraordinary marches. This no doubt must have been due to the partial failure of their transport service, in which the German army showed itself at the first so superior. His son was first of all marched from Paris into Alsace, then into Belgium, then to Paris again, the last "étape" or stage being 75 kilometres (approximately 45 miles), which was marched in one day. The commissariat could not keep up with the troops, so that they got very little to eat, and often had to start off in the morning with nothing but an extra strap-hole to their belts. Since then, however, the commissariat has been efficiently organised. C——'s other son, who is in the English Army, is now a sergeant and has won the D.S.M.

In the afternoon I met N——, who has just returned from Paris, where he has been visiting his wounded son René. The bullet which went through both of René's cheeks only slightly wounded his tongue, and though it fractured both the right and the left maxillary bones, it missed the carotid artery, and the surgeon said that he himself could not have chosen a better passage for it. This is his father's chief consolation. René will be neither



blind nor dumb. René had been told to storm a German trench at the head of his detachment, but had only one ladder at his disposition, and pointed this out to the captain, who, however, peremptorily repeated the order, senseless as it was, so René dashed forward, followed by his men, all of whom were shot down except three, and these went back. René got his wound when almost at the Boche trench. It stunned him at first, then he scrambled back on all fours, not seeing very well the direction he was taking, but fortunately reached the French trenches, so covered with blood, which was pouring out of his mouth and nose, that some of the men could not bear the sight and turned away shouting, "Allez mourir ailleurs." This suggested to René that he was more fit than they were. The wound, in fact, had given him no pain, and had felt just like the cut of a whip. He was now recognised by one of his own men, and taken to the ambulance, where the captain came to congratulate him and apologise for having given him an impossible and needlessly dangerous task. For his bravery he is to be recommended for the Legion of Honour. Certainly in spite of his wound he was wonderfully lucky, first because the wound might so easily have been fatal, secondly, because he guessed the right direction when he scrambled back, and, thirdly, because the Boches did not fire at him while he did so. The reason for their forbearance became obvious the next day, when they came in with three officers and surrendered. They had evidently intended to do this when the attack took place, and though they defended the trench, for fear of drawing the German fire against themselves, they

wanted to conciliate their future captors by not killing the wounded French officer.

*July 7th.*—A note has been issued by M. Millerand which forbids French generals to make disparaging remarks about certain army corps. This order has clearly been provoked by the incident connected with the 17th Army Corps, no allusion to which has been allowed to be published, though it is universally discussed.

Old V——, a well-known and typical inhabitant of Nice, expressed views to-day on the subject of the Italian campaign which represent fairly enough the opinion of quite a number of Frenchmen, especially in the South, where the Italians are not popular. He maintained that the Italians would have done better to place 400,000 men at the disposition of the Allies for the sake of breaking through the German lines on the West, and driving the enemy back into its own country, than by utilising all their forces to win back Trieste and the Trentino. What the Italians conquer now they will be allowed to keep or to retain according as the result of the war is favourable or unfavourable to the Central Powers. So that it would be wiser to aid in crushing Germany and Austria as completely and promptly as possible, and then to demand a rectified frontier. The objection, of course, to this theory is that Italy has first of all to make her very exposed frontiers safe, and that with her present strategy she is going the best way about it. Later on perhaps she will be able to spare some of her men to operate on the Western front.

*July 8th.*—The general feeling of weariness with the war, a somewhat alarming spirit of lassitude promoted by Clemenceau's irritating campaign in his paper *L'Homme Enchaîné*, is being met by encouraging articles in the Paris Press, which are evidently inspired by the Government. It is a dangerous mood, which, to some extent and for different reasons, is infecting us all. After nearly a year of war, Europe presents itself as a perfect Hell on Earth, and one feels that it is a special personal misfortune, a curse indeed, to have lived in such a century. The profound sadness which overcomes one, and is becoming daily more and more of a burden, must leave an impression upon our lives from which it will be impossible wholly to recover whatever may be the ultimate outcome of things. It will only be after the war that we shall be able to estimate our moral losses.

## CHAPTER XIX

*Departure for Angoulême : Between Tarascon and Toulouse : A wounded major : " My spurs, madame, are sharp ! " : The Spanish physician : Germans more barbarous than Turks : French army will insist on complete crushing of Germany : Superiority of French air service : Aspect of Toulouse : The surgeon's wife at Agen : " Don't try to keep the tears in "*

*July 9th.*—I went to the Bureau des Etrangers this morning to get a " laissez-passer " for Angoulême. No one in the office knew in which department Angoulême was, and finally the deputy mayor decided that " this was not a matter of the slightest importance."

*TOULOUSE, July 10th.*—The train between Tarascon and Toulouse was crowded. A wounded officer, a major, lay at full length on the bench opposite me. The other occupant of the compartment had managed to reserve the remaining seats with his hand-luggage. During the night, at one of the intermediary stations, the major, roused by somebody's attempt to enter the carriage, exclaimed to me : " Maintenant, monsieur, il s'agit de défendre nos places." The defence was a spirited one, but finally struck its flag to the supplications of a man who begged almost on his knees for just a little

place for his wife, exhausted by standing in the corridor ; after which he ushered in—to our surprise, for we had thought that the little place was for a little person—the hugest woman I have ever seen. She would have made her fortune at a fair. She was proceeding to sit down on the prostrate major's feet when he yelled : “ Madame, I warn you that my spurs are very sharp.” “ Sir,” she said, in a tender and pitying voice, “ you are wounded ? ” “ Yes, madame, I am.” “ Then, sir, I am indeed sorry to disturb you ! ” Her huge frame hovered for a moment over the three places which it needed to fill, and then the major, making the best of things, sat up, and talked for the rest of the night.

“ You are Spanish, are you not ? ” he inquired of the man sitting opposite to him, and on learning that he was a Spanish physician, he continued : “ I have a great liking for Spain and Spanish people, for like all Toulousains I am of remote Spanish origin, as you can indeed judge by my appearance, which is distinctly Spanish. . . . ” The Spanish doctor bowed. “ Also I speak Spanish.” The major spoke a few words in Spanish with the doctor. “ But I must say this,” he continued in French, “ that your Press has not been very amiable to us since the war began.” “ The influence of the priesthood,” said the Spanish doctor, “ which is the curse of Spain, is the reason of that. However, we scientific men, all that is most intelligent in the political world, the best of our literary men, those who have an international reputation, are on the side of the Quadruple Entente. Then our industrial and commercial classes are also with you in spite of the efforts which the Germans have been making

for years past to secure a predominating place in our markets. Since the war we have been supplying France with many things that she has stood in need of, cloth in particular. That blue uniform that you are wearing is made of Spanish cloth."

The major, reiterating his great sympathy for the Spanish tongue, said that he also spoke Provençal, which was practically identical with his native patois of Toulouse, and this, with French and with Arabic, acquired in Morocco, enabled him to get about the world pretty comfortably. These languages had stood him in good stead in the Dardanelles, where, what with the Foreign Legion and the Mussulman troops, the language difficulty was considerable. "I am returning home for the second time from the Dardanelles to convalesce, with my seventh wound. When the war broke out I was fighting in Morocco, but, though they wanted to keep me there, I insisted on accompanying my regiment to Turkey. It will be a long business, but we shall get to Constantinople all right. We advance daily, slowly but surely. The Allied troops have been roused to the highest pitch of fury by the outrages committed by the Germans in defiance of all the rules of war, and, I tell you, we fight like demons. The Germans are more barbarous even than the Mussulmans; they do many vile and cowardly things that no Mussulman would do. For instance, a party of them sent out a white flag shortly after we first arrived at the Dardanelles, offering to surrender. An engineer officer was sent to receive their submission, and they seized him, and hanged him, yes, hanged him in the presence of the Turks, with the idea of impressing them,

but no Mussulman would feel anything but horror and contempt for such a piece of treachery. I know it, for I know the Mussulmans of Morocco. There was no quarter after that. I will tell you another thing. We French officers are so disgusted with the villainies committed by the Germans in Belgium and the North of France that the great majority of us have no intention to interfere when the French soldiers start reprisals as soon as they get into German territory. They can do as they please as far as I am concerned. I shan't order them to massacre old women and men and little children, and I don't think that there are many of them who would. But I shan't punish them if they do. I shall close my eyes. And you may be sure of this, the French will burn down a German town or village for every French one that the Germans have destroyed. And the army will insist upon full satisfaction. We are not going to put up with a cheap peace. If the politicians try to make us accept anything but the complete crushing of Germany, they will find that they have made a mistake. We are numerous, and we will impose our own terms. We will take the matter into our own hands if need be. There is no doubt about it. The army is unanimous.

"The German arrogance is inconceivable for those who have not witnessed it. I was present when one of my sergeants searched a Prussian officer who had just been taken prisoner. He angrily and roughly pushed the sergeant away, declaring that he had a right to be searched by an officer of his own rank only ; which is not even true. The sergeant caught him a staggering blow

on the ear, and this in the presence of German troops who had also surrendered, which made it doubly humiliating, and he added, 'You can think yourself lucky that I didn't shoot you through the head.' For the Prussian officer was even more haughtily protesting against having been struck while his former subordinates were looking on.

"Where we are indisputably superior to the Germans is in our air service. The German airmen are no good. They have no pilots worth talking about. And this is the reason why they always attack at night, while the French and British pilots boldly do what they have to do in the daytime. A German pilot will nearly always flee before a French or an English airman.

"We are working in perfect intelligence with our British Allies. We are on the right and the English on the left. And most of the hard work is now done. It will be easier henceforward. Ah, the Dardanelles is the place in which to win stripes. I was a sub-lieutenant in Morocco when the war broke out, and now I am a major. Pretty good for ten months' work, isn't it?"

"And your most recent wound? Tell us about that," said the Spanish doctor.

The Toulousain major's head being completely swathed in bandages it was obvious that he had been hit there, but he had also received a grenade splinter in the back, from which he suffered even greater pain and inconvenience. It was this wound which the giantess, who had snored a little ostentatiously through his talk, had prevented him from alleviating, for she had forced him to sit up.

"I was leading my men against a Turkish trench



in a bayonet charge," said the Toulousain major, "when I felt two blows just as from a stick. My mouth immediately filled with blood, and I fell. My first instinctive act was to feel at my neck for the place whence, as I thought, the blood came for I feared that the carotid artery was severed, in which case it would have been all up. But I found the artery all right, and at that moment the bullet dropped out of my mouth. Some of my men came up at this moment, and I fainted. However, a good dose of brandy soon pulled me together, but, of course, I was of no more use, and had to be sent to the hospital. Every real wound knocks a man out. The stories of officers, badly wounded, continuing to lead their men are all nonsense. The first and almost immediate result of what I call a real wound—not, of course, a mere scratch or a slash which draws a little blood—is a loss of "moral." You are no longer the same man. I don't mean to say that you become a coward, but you have no more energy or initiative. You are suddenly indifferent to everything. And you always fall. This I imagine is due to the loss of blood, and perhaps also to the shock. Until I got into the hands of the surgeons I was not conscious of any pain." This remark making the Spanish doctor smile, the major assured him again of his great sympathy for Spain and Spaniards, and the Spanish language; and there was a great bustle of leave-taking and of good-wishing, from which the giantess was not wholly excluded, as the train entered the Toulouse station.

That major will leave his gallant bones on Turkish soil, for thither he is returning in a week's time,

or come back a general, with his bandages replaced by the laurels of victory. Of that I am firmly convinced. He was a fine specimen of the bright, courageous, talkative southern Frenchman, a soldier to the marrow, and none the less so for a certain bravado in his manner and speech, and "panache" in his gestures, the romantic birthright of the true Provençal, who traces his ancestors to the troubadours, and quarters the allied arms of De la Mancha and France on his knight's escutcheon.

Toulouse, that ancient university town, had lost nothing of its exterior calm. From very early in the morning it was in a state of industrial and commercial activity. Its streets are not what you could call clean, and the smoke of factory chimneys hangs a threadbare overcoat of frowsy black over its semi-genteel brick walls. Modern Toulouse has made the mistake of seeking architectural uniformity with its ancient Roman buildings, notably its cathedral, which are chiefly of brick. This is a Boche practice. It gives Toulouse a gloomy tonality which is out of sympathy with the exuberant character of its natives. These are, of course, greatly reduced in number. But the streets and the cafés are still full of life, and as Toulouse is a great half-way house for the Franco-Spanish trade, the war has not diminished the prosperity of the town, but rather increased it. Uniforms and ammunition are being manufactured on the largest possible scale and at hot-haste speed in Toulouse. Of course most of the factories have been militarised for this purpose.

All day long a praying congregation—including not a few soldiers—is to be seen in the Cathedral

of Toulouse, where the strange-coloured and gilded busts of saints and bishops and martyrs which fill the choir stalls, and but for the weird, disquieting quality of their Renaissance art might be mistaken for wax-work models, continue their secular vigil, which no mundane interests can distract. And then : " Bells, bells, bells."

In the train between Toulouse and Bordeaux two young officers, who had just returned wounded from the front, laughed together over the " motives " officially published for certain " citations à l'ordre." One of them read out from the paper he held in his hand a " motive " to the effect that the artillery officer " cited," who was attached to the General Staff, had shown great courage in reconnoitring the enemy's positions. Could he have done less, queried the officer in the carriage, while his friend said that an even more amusing " motive " than the one quoted had accompanied the bestowal of the Legion of Honour, " in spite of the recipient not having altogether merited it."

At Agen, a woman rushed from the corridor into my compartment, and tried (owing to her excitement vainly) to open the door. I opened it, and she then flung herself into the arms of an army surgeon, her husband no doubt, who was waiting for her on the platform. He was leaving for the front, and this was the good-bye. The poor wife was nearly bursting with the effort to keep back her tears. Her face worked convulsively. " But cry, darling," urged the officer tenderly, between paroxysms of kissing ; " don't try to keep the tears in. A good fit of crying will do you good. You know that when one wants to cry, one should

cry. Cry away. You will be relieved and better afterwards. Don't mind anybody. There's only this monsieur here who . . .” “You need not pay any attention to me, madame,” said I. “We shall be alone in the compartment. Weep at your will, to your heart's content, and if you like I will—to keep you in countenance—weep with you.” This offer made them both smile, for they interpreted it in the “galante” French way, without suspecting its sincerity.

## CHAPTER XX

*Angoulême : Auguste, the hedgehog : Suspicious hotels : An aerial island : The laziest people in the world : Angoulême and Balzac : One Simon, a Jew : Angoulême prosperous through the war : Huge consumption of paper by military authorities : Collapse of the cattle fair : No small change : The 14th of July : Ribot : Last letter to P. D—— : Wine-crop ruined : Simplification and muddle : Soldiers and officers : On the ramparts : “ Le beau jambon ! ”*

ANGOULÊME, July 12th.—My American friend F—— at Nice had told me of an hotel at Angoulême where he had stopped some twenty years ago ; he did not remember its name, but it had a large garden and a very extensive view. During the first night of his stay he had been roused by hearing a stealthy movement in his room, and on getting up to find the cause, he discovered a hedgehog, which had evidently come in through the open door-windows. He picked it up carefully with a shovel and a pair of tongs, and placed it upon an ancient Empire console, from which it had no means of descending. In the morning he rang for the waiter, who, when his attention was drawn to the hedgehog, exclaimed : “ O, mais c’est Auguste ! ” Auguste was a domestic hedgehog, kept in the garden to exterminate slugs.

F—— was curious to know whether Auguste was still alive, and without difficulty I found the hotel, which was evidently the one where he had stayed, the Hôtel de F——. But let me warn any English people from ever stopping there. I was met by a Hunnish old witch, literally garmented in dirt, looking, in fact, more like the black smear beneath an ancient gargoyle than a human being. Her unfriendliness, her rudeness, the moment she discovered my English nationality, were marked. The only report that I can now make to my friend F—— is that the hedgehog is evidently dead, and that its spirit and its spines are reincarnated in the carcass of this good lady, who gave herself the airs of the proprietress, though I was since told that she may only have been the cashier. Evidently this is one of those hotels, so numerous in France before the war—there are still two or three of them left in Paris, and there must be many in England—which were subsidised by German agents as centres of espionage. The “table” was generally excellent—money being no object—and this attracted the custom of the officers stationed in the locality. The eavesdropping German or so-called Swiss waiter, the cashier, or some other member of the domestic staff did the rest.

I doubt whether any other town could be pointed to in France where the calm is so complete, and all the more complete by its contrast with the fury of excitement the rest of the world is in, as Angoulême. Built on a high eminence, shaped like a sugar-loaf, Angoulême answers to the definition of an aerial island, surrounded on all sides by winds; perhaps this may account for a certain

insularity in the temperament of its inhabitants, and their attitude towards the war, which is not very dissimilar from that of many of the natives of our own British Isles. I now understand why the deputy mayor of Nice decided that the question of the exact whereabouts of Angoulême "was not a matter of the slightest importance."

This calm is added to by the circumstance that the Angoumois are certainly the laziest people in the world. Their indifference to what goes on outside of the battlemented walls of their town is on a par with their laziness.

Angoulême is the town that Balzac described in *Eve et David* as the native place of Lucien Chardon de Rubempré. The site of the chemist's shop kept by the père Chardon, now occupied by the chief post office, is pointed out.

The statement in England by one Simon that one volunteer is better than three conscripts is a gross insult to the French army, for it implies that one English soldier is better than three French soldiers, which would be a very tactless thing to say, even if it were true, as it most certainly is not. This is the sort of flapdoodle which goes down in England as statesmanship. What a mind the man must have! Compare it for a moment with the German mind. How can we win with such men?

*July 13th.*—On all sides I hear that the war has brought prosperity to Angoulême, where the principal industry is paper-making. Strange as it may seem, though the censorship has forced the French newspapers to reduce their size, and the war has

deprived them of most of their advertising resources, the consumption of paper in France has not declined : it has gone up. This, I am told here, is due largely to the enormous consumption of paper by the military authorities, a large proportion of which has been utilised in the army printing establishments for official notices and communications of all kinds—in other words, “la paperasserie,” of which there is so much complaint. The only prominent and familiar feature of the commercial life of Angoulême which has been brought to a complete standstill is the cattle fair. The cattle fair of Angoulême was world-famed, but the army has requisitioned all the beasts, and now not more than a dozen are put up for sale, and these not of the first quality.

The market is well furnished, especially with fish, notably prawns, which come from Royan, at two hours' distance by train.

There is an extraordinary lack of small change, however. The Chamber of Commerce of Angoulême has issued paper money for 2 francs, 1 franc, and 50 centimes, which is rapidly getting worn out, and, as there is practically no copper coin, is of very little use. In Bordeaux, last October, there was any amount of copper change, but no silver ; here there is a certain amount of silver, but no copper at all. I asked an intelligent-looking waiter what was the explanation, and he attributed it to all the copper money having been requisitioned by the Government for the manufacture of the bronze War Crosses. There is a chance, however, that he was trying to pull my leg, this being one of the favourite forms of amusement of the native



Angoumois, who passes for being very "gogue-nard" as compared with other Frenchmen of the South.

*July 14th.*—This has been, ever since the last war, the great fête-day of France, to celebrate the taking of the Bastille. But there is no fêting this year. Angoulême, which in normal circumstances would have been gay with flags and Chinese lanterns, the braying of orchestras, and the dancing of peasants, has only the calm and "endimanché" appearance of an ordinary public holiday. It is so all over France. "La joie fait peur!"

Ribot has dominated the situation in France by his masterly intellect, amazing qualities of debate, and personal character as no other parliamentarian has done, not excepting Millerand. There is no orator in the Chamber who has the "high seriousness" of Ribot, or an eloquence at once so convincing and so dignified. He is the French statesman of the best type, a man of spotless honour, of irreproachable political probity, with a grasp of public affairs and an alert and dexterous capacity for dealing with them which place him far ahead of any of his contemporaries. He is the Grand Old Man of France, with all the intellectual strength of the late Mr. Gladstone and none of his special failings. In fact, his refusal to play the rôle of a demagogue has prevented him hitherto from rendering to his country all the services that he was capable of. But the "justice immanente des choses" has at last asserted itself in his favour. It was to him that M. Poincaré appealed in the moment of supreme national crisis to take in hand

the Ministry of Finance, which, with the Ministry of War, was the most responsible and the most difficult to handle of all the Ministries. He has acquitted himself of the task with a "maestria" and a virtuosity which his Ministerial colleagues may well envy, for it has roused the admiration of every statesman in the world and the undying gratitude of France, who now for the first time realises what a big man Ribot is. And what patriotic patience and noble philosophy he has displayed. Only a few weeks before the war began he consented, from patriotic reasons, to help out an apparent deadlock by constructing a Cabinet, which was upset in twenty-four hours by a miserable cabal of Radical intriguers and financial plotters, who failed to treat the greatest living French statesman with even ordinary Parliamentary courtesy. This was the shortest-lived Cabinet that was ever formed, the first vote of confidence having been refused to it by a majority of the Chamber, a thing without precedent. But Ribot merely shrugged his shoulders, and remarked that the new generation of politicians seemed to care less about ordinary politeness than did its predecessors. However, Ribot's great qualities were promptly recognised by these same deputies when the great emergency arose, and he nobly and with entire self-abnegation responded to their call. In spite of his great age, he is getting on for eighty, he is still the only Minister in France who can dictate extempore a report upon any question concerning any of the great departments of state—he has been at different times at the head of them all—which any other Minister, working laboriously

with secretaries and documents, would require a week to draw up. Years, too, have bowed the great height from which he towered physically over his colleagues on the Ministerial bench. But they have not dimmed the fire of genius in his eyes, which, with the expanse of the forehead, and the white hair thrown back from it, gives him the air of a prophet. A writer in *La Charente*, a copy of which I picked up here to-day, remarks: "This eminent statesman is acclaimed every time that he appears before Parliament with a new demand for money, which is rare for a Minister of Finance;"—adding very truly: "He is finishing his career in an apotheosis."

*July 16th.*—One of the characteristic traits of French life which strikes an Englishman, and may even cause him some irritation, is the complete emancipation of the small French boy, whose playful impertinences meet with the unleavened indulgence not only of his elders and betters, but even of bigger boys. How different from England! The French method is attributable, I fancy, to an innate love of independence, and a desire to accord individual liberty to all small peoples, which is not an English tendency at all. There is no bullying or fagging of small boys in French schools. A better tradition, however, is, I believe, growing up in this respect in England too, as compared with what existed some years ago. And we English will be the better for it. Freedom alone makes Love possible, and Love is God. The Germans have failed to understand this, but it will be the great lesson of the war.

As I was dining at the "table d'hôte" of the hotel I received with my correspondence the last letter I had sent to D——, which I wrote on the eve of the day that I learned of his death at Dixmude. It came to me through the military dead-letter office, and was a melancholy accompaniment to the soup. On the back of the envelope was scrawled in pencil "D.C.D.," which stands for "décédé" (deceased), and by a special act of courtesy (for this is not general except where near relatives are concerned) was added, "D.C.D., famille prévenue officiellement." The "fusilier marin" who opened the letter must have been flattered by its contents to account for this exceptional communicativeness. "Les fusiliers marins ont combattu avec une telle bravoure de lion," says the letter, "—ici tout le monde en parle—que votre silence me fait craindre que vous ne soyez blessé. . . . Au revoir, cher ami, et que Dieu vous garde !"

Et Dieu le garde bien !

*July 17th.*—The vine-crop in the Charente is completely ruined this year, owing to the lack of labour. The proprietor of the Café de la Plaisance, who is the owner of a vineyard near St. Emilion, told me to-day that while in average years he produced about three hundred barrels a year, this year he did not expect to produce more than fifty, and was undecided as to whether it would be worth while to harvest so little as that. The cause of the ruin is mildew. To combat the mildew the vines have to be treated with a sulphated solution at a particular season of the year. If this is neglected the mildew is certain to destroy the crops.

The lack of hands made it impossible this season to carry out this operation at the critical moment, so that nearly all the grapes have been destroyed. My informant added that while the wheat harvest is likely to be good all over France, there will be a very great scarcity of autumn vegetables, such as potatoes and turnips, for the usual quantity has not been grown, this again owing to labour difficulties. The refugees absolutely refuse to lend a hand. Here in the South, particularly the Charente, a land flowing with wine and abounding in good things of all kinds, they feel exceptionally well off, and are consequently quite disinclined to work. This vineyard owner related to me the experience of one of his friends, a wealthy wine-grower, who has a fine residence near Bordeaux, and is famed for his lavish hospitality. He had taken in a Belgian refugee and his wife, but had been obliged to get rid of them, for he found he was no longer master in his own house. Nothing was good enough for these people, and the last straw was when the Belgian lady took to going into his kitchen and countermanding the orders he had given to his own cook!

In the course of a conversation, which naturally turned upon the war, the proprietor of the Café de la Plaisance, a widely travelled man, who was originally from Bordeaux, but knew South America and England and many other countries thoroughly, remarked upon the superior claim to sympathy of the French private soldier over the French officer. This was such a characteristic French point of view that it seemed to me to be worth noting. The French officer, he said, undertakes a career, which

is a fairly lucrative one, especially for those who are drawn, as is the case with the vast majority of officers, from the bourgeoisie, while the French private soldier dies for a sou (a halfpenny) a day. For the officer the Army is a profession with many prizes, and always a living assured.

I compared this with the conditions in England, where it is the private who gets a living wage while the officer enters the Army without any immediate anticipation of making a living out of his profession. I quoted to him P——'s letter, which I had received the night before, relating that three of his nephews had been at the front, one killed, who had £12,000 a year income, and was the largest landowner in Hertfordshire; the other wounded, and the third a prisoner; while of his own son, who has a commission in a line regiment, he had added: "Arthur is soon going to the front. You might send him a line expressing a hope we probably neither of us feel is founded on probabilities." These elemental differences between the French army organisation and ours are always worth explaining, because they help to dissipate the misunderstandings which so easily arise.

*July 18th (Sunday).*—I went in the early morning and sat on the ramparts near the Cathedral, listening to the bell-ringing and looking over the vast plains which stretch away across the Charente from the foot of the peak on which Angoulême is perched. So distant is the horizon that tall forests make mere pencil-marks, as it were, against the sky-line. To my left was a monument of Carnot, a ridiculous politician, addressing an imaginary audience of

electors, and turning his back, as he naturally would, on all the natural beauties of France. The first plane, with the red-brick roofs, iron chimney-tubes, and yellow smoke issuing from them, one hardly saw. In the further plane, the uprise of tall poplars cross-hatching the landscape with green was so sudden as to be almost negligible. Beyond, a railway train glided like a lizard passing swiftly along a sun-struck wall. Then from behind the white clouds the sun came to paint in, as with a brush shifted here and there, patches of green and yellow. And these finally faded out into the ultimate unreal blue.

The thought came over me of the many friends I have lost through this horrible war, and am likely yet to lose, and the calm and the contrast of the green world stretching before me adding its softening effect, I was intensely sorrowful.

Walking towards the Cathedral, I found myself surrounded by a band of children returned from catechism, shouting and laughing, and I noticed that the noise of children's voices at play, which is generally disturbing, had a curiously soothing and even consoling effect in moments of deep sadness. Some strange sympathetic chord which nature makes to vibrate only in these conditions !

After the service I was looking up at the fine Roman façade of the Cathedral, which would have been so much more interesting if it had not been so brutally restored, when from the open windows of an apartment on a ground floor behind me I heard a rich contralto voice singing :

*Et la charcuterie,  
Et la salade fournie,  
Et le beau jambon !*

An old lady was ironing a blue apron, the dumps of her iron making a suitable accompaniment to her ditty, which was to an ancient, ironic, yet plaintive air. She smiled at me through her spectacles. The fact is that unsophisticated human nature, in common with all simple life, for a reason which is hidden away in the mystery of its origin, literally laughs at Death.

Reflection : Truth is infinite like Time and Space, and cannot, therefore, be confined within the limits of a verbal formula, or expressed as an absolute dogma ; to use the term of the Athanasian Creed as applied to the Godhead, it is *incomprehensible*. This is the best excuse that the Pope could make for his neutrality, but it is the last that he is likely to make. That Christianity should have split on the rock of Peter is mainly due to the general habit of speaking and thinking of Infinite things in terms of the Finite.



## CHAPTER XXI

*Paris : Night effects : Military slang : Champrosay : Dead and wounded : Defection of the 17th Corps : Attitude of the Southerners : Scarcity of meat : A strange mistake : British supplying Germany through Holland : The quays of Paris : Effect of war on literature : Young Turks and Pierre Loti : Colonel L—— : “ Les loins des balles ” : Profits of the stretcherman : Prices at the Central Markets*

PARIS, *July 20th.*—Left Angoulême this afternoon for Paris. The train was very full. A French general kindly consented to my occupying a seat in his reserved carriage. He had extended the same hospitality to a woman with whom he was in deep conversation, an enigmatic-looking person, who said she was a Pole, and might well have been a Boche. They discussed Russian strategy. The general got out at Châtellerault and the Polish woman chummed up with a man who had newly entered the carriage, now no longer reserved. Her capacity for forming apparently intimate and confidential friendships at a moment's notice was extensive and peculiar.

Paris is again full of movement. Nearly everybody is wearing mourning. The women have widely adopted a black straw mourning hat, trimmed with black and with bunches of stone-white grapes.

The effect is inexpressibly horrible, and is rendered even more so when jet-black grapes are substituted for white ones. Only some great novelist with the analytical genius of a Paul Bourget, or a knowledge of the feminine heart, such as is claimed by that old lady-killer Anatole France, could explain to you why, when a woman has lost some one she loves, it becomes an obligation or an instinct with her to wreath her head with artificial grapes of a colour entirely unknown to nature.

Paris almost in darkness at night reminds me a good deal of the Paris I first saw nearly thirty years ago, when there was little or no electricity, the gas lighting was defective, and dimness reigned everywhere. On the whole the return to this old order of things is an improvement æsthetically. The shadows are richer, more varied and graduated, and the rare coloured lights to which they form a background are less garish, and shine with a more jewel-like effect.

July 21st.—I had purchased at Angoulême a little book entitled *Le Langage des Poilus : Petit Dictionnaire des Tranchées*, by Claude Lambert, former stretcherman at the front, which is a collection of the slang words, with explanations, that are most prevalent in the French army. I opened it to-day and found this curious Preface: "In the very interest of our soldiers we have carefully avoided, in the course of this work, inserting any injurious, or even simply comic, expression referring to our enemies." The consequence is that even the word Boche is excluded. Prudent M. Lambert! He ought to be the editor of a London daily.

I went to Champrosay to-day and found everything much as before. Poor old Wagner, the "garde-pêche," has lost his eldest son, first wounded and then chloroformed to death in hospital when undergoing an operation. Alexandre, the sinister drunkard, who used to sing patriotic songs in L——'s café, and whose daughter became the mistress of a rich German at St. Raphaël, was proved to be a spy, and was shot at Vincennes. B——'s son is a prisoner. L——, the baker, has been killed. L. H——'s son-in-law is the sole survivor of the first 43rd Regiment which helped to invade Alsace at the beginning of the war. It has been twice reconstituted since. A——'s son has just returned from Arras, and was present when the men of the 17th Corps refused to march, put up the butts of their guns, and shouted "La Paix ou la Révolution!" The mitrailleuses were turned on them and eight hundred were shot. They were meridionals, and their point of view was that as the Midi was not invaded there was no reason for them to worry about the North. Madame L——, who is a Belgian, is still pessimistic. Madame F——'s husband is engaged in the commissariat department at Bruay, near Béthune, and he has told her of the inhospitable reception experienced by the French troops on the North-Eastern frontier from the local farmers, village shopkeepers, and peasants, who, in many cases, declare that they have no food for sale except to the Germans! This shows how real has been the "pacific conquest" of the "limitrophe" Northern districts of France by the Germans previous to the war, unbeknown apparently to the rest of the world. The fact has a

curious interest, but it would be a mistake to exaggerate its importance. These defections are merely local, are attributable to more causes than one, and count for nothing when the "moral" of France is considered as a whole. For the same reason the unpatriotic attitude of a portion of the 17th Army Corps is typical of the sentiments which have always been known to exist among certain political sectarians of the South. It has met with its due repression and punishment. To saddle the whole of the Midi with this particular crime would be most unfair. The Midi has fought splendidly throughout the war, and though there are evidently black sheep everywhere, they are not more numerous in the South than in the North. The German army has all along shown itself far more facile in the matter of surrender than the French.

On the way down to Champrosay, just before reaching Juvisy, I noticed vast quantities of barbed wire, neatly packed in rolls, which the petrol firm of Deutsch (de la Meurthe) is manufacturing. In the carriage a cattle-dealer roared out that at the Corbeil market last week he had sought to buy a calf, but not one had been offered for sale. Meat is getting scarce in this part of the world.

*July 23rd.*—I met my old friend Colonel C—— in Paris, a terrible wreck. His is a very sad case, for he is suffering from a dreadful, and it is to be feared incurable, disease, caught on active service in the East, and known as "camel's leprosy." He is in despair at not being able to go to the front. Only a few years ago, when he was General P——'s "chef de cabinet," he was the youngest and

perhaps the most brilliant colonel in the French army, with, as it seemed, a great career before him.

The following anecdote is authentic. When the great exodus from Paris took place in September last, R——, the great poet, his masculine-looking wife, a famous poetess also, and M——, their son, another poet, who was for a time the butt of the Parisian music-halls on account of his effeminate appearance, fled to the South. On their way they sought hospitality at the house of a Prefect. The next day the chief of the —— police rushed in to the Prefect to inform him that two German spies had been discovered in the town, but they had been most carefully shadowed, and were on the point of being arrested when they suddenly disappeared. "But where did they disappear?" asked the Prefect. "That's just it," said the chief of the police. "I have come to warn you; your life is in immediate danger. They disappeared into the Prefecture. They are *here*!" "But they can't have been spies!" cried the Prefect. "Oh, but they were," insisted the chief of police, "it was perfectly obvious and evident." "How so?" "Well, one was a man disguised as a woman, and the other was a woman dressed as a man." The two "spies" were Madame R—— and her son M——.

People were whispering to one another to-day, "It's my belief that Warsaw has fallen."

*July 25th.*—F——, the painter, who was born in Holland, has just returned from London, and says that what struck him most during his visit was the

discovery that England is provisioning Germany via Holland. Holland can get nothing without the permission of England, whose blockade, so far as that country is concerned, is effective. But nevertheless enormous quantities of goods of all sorts, far in excess of the normal, are openly transported to Holland from Great Britain, with full knowledge of the British authorities, and it is ridiculous to suppose that the British dealers do not know that the ultimate destination of these goods is Germany.

The Dutch papers, which are in some respects better informed than the French, have published an official statistic of the dead, wounded, and missing on all sides since the beginning of the war to within four weeks ago. It reaches the huge total of 15,000,000, of which the dead alone count for 5,000,000.

*July 26th.*—A stroll along the quays drew my attention to the utter absence, since the war, of all interest that the old bookstalls now offer. Old books! They have suddenly aged out of sight and memory. The war has, as it were, hurled the world's history on to the scrap-heap. A ponderous biography of the Right Honourable Henry Labouchere, offered at a franc, and somebody's *Annals of Philadelphia* (2 francs), seemed to belong to a period wholly antediluvian, and to be bereft of any possible claim upon human interest. For the first time in human knowledge the continuity of the world's life has been snapped.

B——, of the Foreign Office, when I asked him this evening how he thought things were going, replied: "Bien!" "And Delcassé, what does he

say? " "Il est content." From B—— I learned that there had been a violent quarrel between General S—— and Millerand, but this had been patched up on General S—— finally consenting to go to the Dardanelles. The Young Turks, he further said, were now secretly suing for peace, through Dutch intermediation, and have asked for Pierre Loti to be sent to Constantinople to treat with them. As Pierre Loti is the author of a novel on Turkish manners, entitled *Les Désenchantées*, this request from exhausted Turkey possesses a certain grain of humour.

Max Régis, the ex-Mayor of Algiers, a well-known figure in Nice, who has just returned from the front, declares on what he maintains to be unimpeachable authority that the value of the shells supplied with the wrong calibre, which prevented the French advance some time ago, was one milliard and a half of francs. They came from America, and the error was the result of a German plot.

*July 27th.*—A joyous, high-spirited figure of a soldier is Colonel L——, commanding the —— regiment of artillery in the Argonne. He is proud of having been "cited" no fewer than seven times in the orders, and of having received exactly the same number of "blames." His valuable initiative occasionally develops into an independence which clashes with strict discipline. "They like me," he says, referring to his chiefs, "only when they want me." He is here on two days' leave, after which he will return to the front. His general verdict on the situation was "there is a little stagnation." He spoke of the generals who carefully refrain from

approaching the zone of danger, and who are known as "les loins des balles" (a play upon words suggested by the title of the once popular waltz, "Loin du Bal"), of the officers of the General Staff who avoid the trenches "pour ne pas se salir," and of the villainous character of the great majority of the stretchermen ("brancardiers"), whose chief object is to rifle the pockets of the wounded and the dead, whether German or French. A skilful and active stretcherman, he said, will make as much as three thousand francs a month, and it is a fact, he maintained, that when the dead are buried never a farthing is found on them. He related an anecdote with reference to this that had its heroic side. As a result of orders that he had given, the German fire had been drawn in such a way that while it forced a certain number of French troops to retire from a position they had taken up (with no intention of holding), it destroyed an entire detachment of Germans who were in between. The French troops returned without loss except one stretcherman, who was missing, and what was the Colonel's astonishment when he saw this man calmly creeping back to the French trenches all by himself and in a perfect hail of German bullets. That he got back safely was nothing less than a miracle, and when the Colonel questioned him, he coolly explained that he had stopped behind to go through the pockets of the German dead and wounded, and grumbled because he had found only the value of thirty louis among the lot. "I ought," said Colonel L——, "to have had the man court-martialled, but I felt more inclined to recommend him for the Military Medal."



The Colonel had some interesting aphorisms connected with military service which were worth noting. One of them was: "In war, authority is no use unless you abuse it." This was with reference to his treatment of two spies, both Frenchmen, and one of them an ex-gendarme, who persisted in bicycling through his lines on one pretext or another, with the result that the Germans invariably "spotted" his position a short time afterwards and bombarded it. As these men had their papers in perfect order, and professed to be employed on secret service by the French General Staff, he could not induce the military judicial authorities to arrest them. One of them even had the impudence to tell him that he was charged with the search for deserters. "But you can't expect to find deserters in the firing-line," said the Colonel. Finally he gave orders to his men that the next time these bicyclists appeared, to pounce on them, on no account to bring them before him, but to take them quietly into the nearest wood and blow their brains out. "And I will cover you," he added. One of them was caught and shot in this way; the other, the ex-gendarme, managed to escape, but was arrested later, his guilt proved, and he is now undergoing penal servitude for life. Both were natives of Nancy.

The Colonel confirmed what I have so often heard stated as to the hostile attitude towards the French army of the inhabitants of the Meuse, as compared with their abject servility towards the Germans when the latter occupied their villages. In this connection he related an amusing anecdote of the Socialist-Radical Mayor of one of these villages,

who, when the Colonel arrived after driving out the Germans, wanted to discuss Socialism with him all the time, showing the utmost unwillingness to be of any service. "Finally," said the Colonel, "I had him arrested and imprisoned him in the church, the roof of which, on anti-clerical grounds, he had always refused to have repaired. It was pouring with rain, and he was obliged, notwithstanding his protestations, to spend two days and two nights in the wet and mire, to the intense joy of the "curé" and most of the other inhabitants.

Talking of the different types of French soldier with whom he has to deal, the Colonel said that the speciality of the Parisian "Apache" is to creep up to the German sentinels and knife them. They show great skill in this, and as an encouragement they are allowed to keep what they find on their victims. But their booty rarely exceeds thirty francs. He said that the greatest proportional loss of life had been, of course, among the infantry, but after them came the doctors. The worst soldiers of all were the "gendarmerie." Every soldier fought better if his regiment had a distinctive badge of some kind, no matter what—just something to give him a sense of "esprit de corps," and of emulation with other regiments. That is why all regiments who have a distinctive uniform, such as the Zouaves, the Spahis, or the Chasseurs à Pied, were more "go-ahead" than the others. A mere number does not suffice. He confirmed the reports that have been current about the defection on given occasions of the 15th, 17th, and 18th Army Corps, mainly recruited in the South, and principally in Marseilles, Toulouse, and Bordeaux, and thought

that the Meridional Frenchman, after a certain experience of warfare, its discomforts, and dangers, seemed pretty generally inclined towards the theory that after all the South could do without the North, and to risk one's skin to save it was a piece of foolishness.

Speaking of Joffre, he complained, though he had great admiration for his qualities as a general, that he was a little too severe on his officers in the matter of alcoholic drinks and other physical needs, the self-denial of which tended to saintliness, but constituted a severe strain on the nerves. Accordingly brandy had to be smuggled down one's throat in coffee, while "red wine" covered a multitude of forbidden things.

Colonel L—— calculated that his own guns must have killed, since the beginning of the war, at least 25,000 men.

He laughed over the ridiculous habit of the so-called military experts in England of translating "cote" as "hill," "Cote 60"—Hill 60, and so forth. If "cote" were to mean hill, it would have to have a circumflex accent over the o. It means, of course, degree of altitude above sea-level, and may refer to a position which so far from being a hill may be at the bottom of a valley. It is the same word as "cote" in the expression "cote de la Bourse," which we translate into English as "quotation." The number of hills which our expert wiseacres and newspaper "fakers" have discovered in Flanders is worthy of Alice in Wonderland.

On the subject of the excessive eagerness of the shopkeeping class that the war should be over

quickly, Colonel L—— told an amusing story of a stationer from whom he was ordering some headed notepaper for official purposes. The address for the heading had been satisfactorily arranged except for the date. "Shall we make it 1915, Colonel," asked the stationer insinuatingly. "Surely the war won't last . . ." "1915! You must be mad!" "1916, Colonel!" pleaded the stationer. Make it 1916!" But the Colonel shook his head. "Marchez pour tout le siècle!" he cried tragically. (In other words, leave the date of the century blank.) "Oh, Colonel, Colonel!" groaned the stationer in despair, wringing his hands, "don't say that! Oh, don't, don't say that!"

The new military rule which forbids the serving of soldiers in uniform with any alcoholic liquor in the cafés, except beer and wine, has created the amusing spectacle of an officer sitting in front of a civilian and drinking his cognac, while the civilian reaches over from time to time to refresh himself with the officer's beer.

The prices at the Central Markets are much higher than they were at the end of last year. This was what struck me when I strolled through the market to-day; and they are much higher than at Nice. Cabbages cost 60 and even 70 centimes each. Even the wild mushrooms known as "girolles," which come from the forest of Fontainebleau, are priced 60 and 70 centimes a kilo, which is double their ordinary price. In the circumstances it is surprising that the excellent middle-class restaurant La Pépinière does not raise its prices, but seems rather to have reduced them.

*July 28th.*—My breath was entirely taken away this morning by reading in an English paper that a dean preaching in Westminster Abbey had declared that the widely circulated story of angels seen in the retreat from Mons was a myth. What can he know about it? If it is a priori a myth, and there are to be no more angels, why not deny Christ right away as the Hon. Venetia Stanley seems to have done?

An Englishman named P——, who lives in Rome, introduced himself to me this evening, claiming an acquaintance, which I had forgotten, made many years ago. He said that the British military authorities had finally made up their minds to attack Germany on the Rhine with troops which are now being passed through Holland in mufti. He knew this, he said, for a fact, because the person who had the arrangements in hand for the passage of these troops was his own cousin!

## CHAPTER XXII

*Greatness of the French sacrifice as compared with the English : The harvest : A polite mayor and a foolish gendarme : End of the first year of the war : The one great lesson of history : Alphonse Daudet at Champrosay in 1870 : Souvenirs of Napoleon : " Robert Helmont " : The burning of the farm : An adventurous chimney-sweep : What the " bistro " said : Mystery of Desclaux's degradation : Stories of the Bouillon B——*

CHAMPROsay, July 29th to July 30th.—Only old men, women, and children are to be seen in Champ-prosay, which in this respect resembles all the villages of France. In the entire commune, which includes Draveil, 55 have been killed out of a population of 1500. These are the average statistics for all the villages in France, and are pointed to as showing how much greater has been the French sacrifice as compared with the English. Practically everybody here is in mourning.

The harvest, which is already gathered in, has been exceptionally abundant, though the corn is poor in straw, and the barley is in parts of inferior quality. This latter circumstance is attributable to lack of manure, owing to the scarcity of cattle, and all the horses being at the front. Also a great many fields have been sown this year which for

some years past had been left fallow and neglected. I am reminded of what my friend at Angoulême, the St. Emilion wine-grower, said: "Three good harvests suffice to enrich France."

It is necessary to have one's "permis de séjour" stamped, so I went to the "mairie" at Draveil and found a very polite and intelligent mayor, and a monumental ass in the shape of the "brigadier de la gendarmerie," who made himself as offensive as he dared, and was impudence and ignorance incarnate. This is the type of little village jack-in-office who is the curse of the country. He is a bully against whom the local population has no redress, because it is a principle of French administration "to cover the subordinate." More deep-lying ill-feeling and discontent have been hatched and nourished by persons like this than is generally understood. People wonder at the unexpected proportions which indifference to the fate of the country has reached among the peasant class in many parts of France, where open preference has been expressed for the Germans, and espionage in their favour has been practised on such a scale that it has become necessary to depopulate the military zones. If the truth were known, it is due to the domineering and irresponsible methods of some such petty, doltish, and mischief-loving official as the "brigadier de la gendarmerie" at Draveil that this hatred for anything that bore the French administrative stamp has arisen. Colonel L—— told me that no body of men in the army have shown themselves to be such persistent shirkers (he used a much stronger expression) as the gendarmes, who constitute the military police

at the front. Their one idea is to involve some unfortunate soldier in an accusation of breach of the military law so that they can be charged with arresting him, and conveying him for judgment behind the lines, thus escaping from the danger zone. One gendarme, whom he reproached for having acted in this way, replied in an injured tone, "But we gendarmes are combatants." The Colonel retorted, "Oui, vous êtes des combattants pour ne pas vous combattre !" ("Yes, you fight not to fight !")

*July 31st.*—We are now at the end of the first twelve months of the war. The general impression is not so cheerful as at the end of last year, for during the interval the operations have not progressed as quickly as it was believed they would. The great "poussée" (push forward) announced for the spring could not take place, and the prospect of another winter campaign fills all minds with apprehension and horror. There is a painful comparison, which people are widely remarking and pointing out, between the booing and cooing of the British Minister of Munitions to the coal people in Wales, and the desperate and, it is feared, hopeless stand of the Russians at Warsaw. Here, at twelve miles to the South-East of Paris, we hear the dull booming of the guns at Compiègne and Soissons, from which the German front has not budged an inch since the Battle of the Marne eleven months ago. Yet in the depression naturally caused by these circumstances, which have so deeply disappointed the hopes we all nourished in December last for a quick termination of the



war, there is an active leaven of courage and high resolution. We have learned now that a great war cannot be won with small men and small means, that great statesmen are not to be manufactured out of little lawyers or useful public servants out of scamps, that a silk purse cannot be made out of a sow's ear. No more can a sow's ear be made out of a silk purse, and it is useless waging war with the kid gloves of pacifism and philanthropy. Yet we *know* that we shall win in spite of the treason and the treachery and the paralysing party intrigues which have been rife at home and abroad. The three great peoples of Great Britain, France, and Russia have now taken "la barre en main"; they have the ball between their feet, and though the end of the war may come slowly, it will bring them the salvation which, in the long run, all nations, like individuals, must work out for themselves. That this will also be the salvation of humanity is another sure guarantee that it will finally be achieved. For the one great lesson of the history of the world, the only one perhaps of which we can be absolutely certain, is the slow but inexorable triumph of Good over Evil, of Right over Wrong.

*Aug. 1st.*—A——, an adjutant of "Pompier" (the Fire Brigade) of Paris, who in the old days was a companion in mushroom hunts in the Forest of Sénart, was here on three days' leave and expressed the utmost confidence in the final success of the Allies. He has friends at Issy-les-Moulineaux, the French avion depot near Paris, and they tell him that each French avion factory

in France is turning out three avions a day. He has also learned that vast British reinforcements are arriving daily on the Western front, that all France, from Boulogne to Amiens and Havre to Rouen, is a huge British camp, where Kitchener's Army is completing its instruction. On the front the British guns are so numerous as almost to touch one another.

*Aug. 2nd.*—Madame B——, who sells fishing-tackle close to the station, related the exodus from Champrosay in the early days of September. In his *Contes de Lundi*, Alphonse Daudet drew much the same picture forty-five years ago. He was then living in the ancient gabled cottage next to this, and describes the unwonted stir in the courtyard beneath the window of the room where I am writing, the loading up of the little country cart with the household belongings, the careful disposition on a pile of bedding of the domestic cat, the loosening of the dog from its kennel, the locking of the doors, and then "Hue! hue!" and the neighbour started with his little family en route for Paris. Alphonse Daudet is long dead, and his family have left Champrosay, and Madame D——, the sole survivor of that melancholy scene, is comfortably stowed away in an almshouse some miles away. But the saddest feature in the story, which we English find so much difficulty in appreciating, is that the same tragedy should have happened twice in the course of one ordinary lifetime. Twice this invasion of devastating and murderous Huns!

When I visited Champrosay in the early part

of September last year, with the exception of L——, who owns this house, and Madame F——, who has succeeded him as the licensee of the adjoining café, the entire population almost had left, among the few exceptions being Madame B——. The Germans were expected to arrive at any moment, and preparations were already being made for the blowing up of the bridge at Corbeil. Madame B—— said she had nowhere to go, and so she made up her mind to remain and risk the consequences. The fugitives, she said, spent a lot of money, which they could ill afford, and then, after the Battle of the Marne, returned, looking rather foolish. Oddly enough, though Madame B—— had the courage to stop behind and face the Germans, if need be, she has not been to Paris since the war began, for she is afraid of Taubes! This courage of inertia, wedded to unreasoning fears, is very feminine. She said that fishing was exceptionally good at present, for the river had been left practically unfished last year, and in justification of her statement I witnessed my old friend G——, the "roi des pêcheurs" of Champrosay, land a barbel a few minutes later which weighed eleven and a half pounds.

What war has meant to France during the past one hundred years is clearly conveyed by many of the historic souvenirs associated with Champrosay and the neighbourhood. Two miles down the river is Fromenteau, where the Tsar made his headquarters in 1814. At the château of Evry, a mile up the river from Champrosay, on the opposite bank, were the head-quarters of Prince von Schwarzenberg, his chief of staff, and commander-in-chief of the Austrian army, and there he received the visit of

Marshal Ney, who came without the consent of Napoleon to arrange an armistice. The Essonne flows parallel to the Seine at Corbeil, and it was across the Essonne that Marmont marched the 10th Corps to make his treacherous surrender at Paris, which forced Napoleon to abdicate. Even now there are old walls in the forest of Sénart, on the opposite side of the river, with loopholes which date from the Napoleonic epoch. Three invasions in one full lifetime! Among Marmont's generals was Comte Ledru des Essarts, who violently protested against his treason, and afterwards, when peace had been made, came with several other of Napoleon's generals to live in retirement at Champrosay and the neighbourhood. Their houses may be recognised by the heraldic lions, with one paw on a cannon-ball, which ornament the entrance gates. General Ledru purchased the house which faces the entrance to the Rue Alphonse Daudet, with its ancient park in which are entrances to subterranean passages (probably ancient aqueducts) dating from the time of the Romans. These passages honeycomb the forest and wind underground as far, they say, as the Bastille. The house subsequently became a sanatorium, and has now been temporarily converted into a convalescent military hospital. Ledru's great-nephew is my friend B——, the director of the Casino of Mentone, who has identified his ancestor's abandoned grave in the little cemetery of Draveil. Then there is Alphonse Daudet's former property purchased from the heirs of General Simon, another of Napoleon's heroes. The old military element has long ago deserted the place, to be succeeded by merchants and financiers,

one of whom, Baumann, accused of being a Boche, and of having trafficked in wheat with the enemy, is now the centre of an infuriated controversy which is agitating Parliament and the Press, and is the prime subject of gossip in Champrosay.

In *Robert Helmont*, by Alphonse Daudet, which is being republished in a sixpenny edition, the author gives a very curious description of Champrosay during the German occupation in 1870. It is in the form of a diary, and Robert Helmont is Alphonse Daudet himself. He was then living at the Hermitage, now in part a tea-garden or open-air café, and formerly the studio of the great French painter Delacroix. A portion of the Cordelier Monastery, burnt during the Revolution, from which the Hermitage derives its name, still exists. The most striking character in *Robert Helmont* is the occupant of the Farm of Champrosay, Goudeloup, who so narrowly escaped being hanged in his own farm. The noose was round his neck when he made the Freemason's sign of distress, and the German captain who had ordered his execution, being a Freemason, let him go. But the farm was set on fire, and the traces of the burning are still visible. Goudeloup hid himself in the forest of Sénart after his release, and pursued German stragglers with a huge pair of gardener's shears, with which he pounced upon them from behind and cut their throats, snipping the carotid artery. When he took refuge at the Hermitage with Robert Helmont, he was at his fifteenth victim in two months. He had reached his one-and-twentieth when he was killed by a shell in an attempt made with Robert Helmont to flee the neighbourhood. Robert

was rescued by Dr. R—— of the neighbouring village of Draveil, and finally returned to the Hermitage, as being the safest place for him after all. He describes the destruction of the game in the forest of Sénart by the Germans. The deer, which were then plentiful, have not since been replaced. His relation shows that the Germans were every bit as brutal in 1870 as they are now. The local peasants, he said, were so panic-stricken that they mutually denounced one another to curry favour with the invaders, revealing hidden stores of wealth, and so forth. "It was shocking," he says, "to see them slinking along the walls, squinting fearsomely, with bended chins, obsequious and vile, like Oriental Jews."

Old P——, who is one of the oldest inhabitants of Champrosay-Draveil, has descriptions of what happened here during the last war which are much in the same vein. The most astonishing figure—without even excepting Goudeloup—which the events gave prominence to in this little locality was an Italian chimney-sweep named Bricciotti, who, when the authorities had taken flight, assumed the functions of mayor. On the arrival of the Germans he invested himself with the tricolour scarf of office, and presented himself to the German captain, who promptly tore the scarf off, and gave the improvised magistrate a thundering kick behind for daring to exhibit in his presence the national French colours. Bricciotti, however, very shortly afterwards had his revenge. He came across a convoy of German sheep in the care of a German soldier who was accompanied by his son. He attacked the soldier, and finally beat him to death

with a paving-stone in the courtyard of the Hermitage. The sheep he captured, but the German soldier's son escaped with a bad knife wound, and managed to reach Draveil and the ambulance there, which was under the direction of the same "Dr. R——" who rescued Robert Helmont. "R——," whose name was Rouffy, was afterwards the Mayor of Draveil, and there is a monument to him in the village square. The young German fainted on arrival, and there now presented itself a moral problem for the doctor's solution, which is one of the most terrible "hard cases" I have ever heard of. If the young German came to his senses, it was certain that he would denounce his father's murderer and the capture of the sheep to the German military authorities. The man who had brought him to the ambulance had told the doctor what had happened. Doctor Rouffy promptly dispatched his patient into the other world with a strong dose of chloroform, and thus saved Champrosay from being burnt and the population from being massacred. But what a decision to have to take! Bricciotti made a fine profit out of the sheep. He also organised a systematic pillaging of the French villas, and afterwards used his authority as mayor to station guardians in those that had been ransacked, his idea being that it would be on the guardians that the suspicion of having committed these depredations would naturally fall when the owners of the villas came back. The end of the war saw him quite a wealthy man. The Goudeloups still inhabit Champrosay.

*Aug. 3rd.*—Bicycled to Paris. Opposite Ville-

neuve, a young "bistro," or innkeeper, who ferried me across, and spoke English—he had even been to Oxford with a football team—complained of unfair treatment by the General Staff, who allowed restaurants on the opposite side of the river to keep open till 10 P.M., but on his side only till 8. For being found sitting with his mother in his lighted but closed restaurant a quarter of an hour after 8 he had been condemned to close his establishment for a week. A request to be received in audience by the General had met with no response. He had a brother who had been wounded so badly that the operation of trepanning had been necessary; as for himself he had formerly been in the motor-cycle corps, but had been smashed up in a collision before the war. He used two picturesque phrases: "If you pull too hard upon a string you end by strangling the person who has it round his neck.—A dog tied up too long will end by trying to break his chain." He added: "We are 600,000 'marchands de vin' in France, and the Government will find out that our patience has a limit."

In Paris the mood is somewhat pessimistic owing to the deadlock. I heard of one man who had been obliged to quit Compiègne on account of the constant nerve-racking noise of the cannonade, while his father-in-law, who had a weak heart, died of it. This man said that if he himself had stopped there any longer he felt that he would have gone mad.

There is a mystery surrounding the military degradation of Desclaux, which took place at the Ecole Militaire this morning. The ordinary public was rigorously excluded, and the general belief is



that the man degraded, or who went through the process of military degradation, was not Desclaux at all, for he was tall and stout, with a heavy moustache, while Desclaux is a little man, who has grown thin in prison, and is close-shaven. The *Excelsior*, whose reporter had managed surreptitiously to secure a photograph of the ceremony, was forbidden by the censor to publish it, but E. L——, who has seen the proof, made me a comic sketch of the group, of which the supposed Desclaux is the centre. A fat man is handing, with an amiable smile, a sword to a deferential sergeant. In his opinion there can be no doubt that the man who had the buttons torn off his uniform, and whose supposititious sword was broken across a sergeant's knee, was not the real Desclaux. The whole essence of these public degradations is in their publicity. To make a hole-and-corner business of them is to negative their effect as an exemplary and deterrent punishment.

Economy in every direction is the order of the day in Paris, and quite small things show how this is affecting the life of the people. I used to think that the one place in the world where the visitor would be safe from those little financial tricks which the Frenchman, and the Englishman too, for the matter of that, is fond of getting off on the unsophisticated foreigner on his travels, was that temple of double and triple book-keeping and commercial control, a Bouillon B——. To begin with, they take such elaborate precautions to prevent themselves from being cheated. On entering a Bouillon B—— you are furnished with a numbered ticket. And when you leave it, there

is a kind of "levée d'écrou"; a not too amiable gaoler stationed in a little box at the door examines your papers, in the shape of the bill, paid and receipted, and if you have duly performed your task, and you can show "patte blanche," you are permitted to go. The "caissière" is invariably a lightning calculator, and never in my entire experience of Paris have I known one of them to make the mistake of a sou, either in her favour or mine. But on this occasion I was deliberately offered the change on 50 francs for a 100 franc note. The inane excuse given by the waitress was such as to exclude all possibility of a real mistake having been made. In fact, though I had already tried to console her with the remark that "every one can make a mistake," she gave the whole conspiracy away. The "caissière" was a black-haired, embittered-looking young woman, with the sunken, bespectacled eyes of extreme short sight. It is noticeable how often short sight is accompanied by moral shortcomings. It is certainly one of the wickedest features of war that it promotes wickedness. To be obliged in future at a Bouillon B—— to add up for oneself that complicated "feuille," with its blue and red marks dotted all over it against the prices of the different items on the menu! To be obliged to scrutinise the change! A thing that I have never yet been able to do with even approximate accuracy! What losses this war entails. It is as bad as losing an old friend to lose an old faith.

Georges Courteline, the humorist, to whom I casually related this incident, was interested in it because he had been in his early days a "vérifi-

cateur" at B——'s, and he related how in spite of their elaborate accountancy and precautions against cheating, B——'s had been cheated on one occasion out of several thousand francs. Two confederates entered the restaurant, sat at separate tables, and one of them having paid his bill with a 1000 franc note, gathered up his change and went away. The other had paid at the same time and given the waitress a 100 franc note. When she returned with the change, he looked at it with astonishment, and said innocently, "But I gave you a 1000 franc note!" Protests on both sides. "No," contended the waitress, "it was the customer who just went out who gave me a 1000 franc note; you gave me a 100 franc note." "What you've clearly done," said confederate No. 2, "is this. You have confused the two bills, and you have given my change to the other fellow. If you ask at the pay-desk you will find they have there a 1000 franc note, which is the one I gave you. The proof is that it is the only money I had on me. I received it this morning from a customer to pay an account, and in the letter which accompanied it he was careful to note the number in case it might be lost in the post. Here is his letter, and you will see at the 'desk' that the numbers correspond." This, of course, proved to be correct. The "desk" was obliged to recognise that the waitress had made a mistake, for which she was responsible, and paid the change from the 1000 franc note a second time, for the confederate had even threatened to send for a policeman unless he was given satisfaction. By taking very rapid meals in half a dozen B—— establishments the thieves

managed to secure a large booty, and it was only when Courteline in the evening had to audit the accounts that the fact of this strange mistake having occurred several times over revealed the trick. Of course this was a swindle that could only be practised in the course of one day.

## CHAPTER XXIII

*Lucien Baumann and the Corbeil flour-mills : Campaign of the " Action Française " : Glut of game : Vipers as food : Details from the front : Soldiers on furlough : A Norwegian on Russia and George : " Crooked " gambling-tables at Nice : The " moral " in the trenches : The Toulouse corps : The British soldier's love of barter : Jewish influence in the army : Flirtations at Liévin : War souvenirs*

Aug. 5th.—The Corbeil flour-mills are working night and day, and are under a military guard. The enigmatic Lucien Baumann still continues to be director, and though every day his arrest and incarceration are announced by the villagers, it does not come off. The Germans who used to crowd up the little Hôtel des Petits Ponts, opposite the mill, and were the chief members of its technical staff, have, of course, disappeared. Baumann maintains, it seems, that he is of Alsatian birth, and was naturalised a Frenchman at the age of forty. This is the age, by the way, when the naturalised foreigner is no longer called upon to do his military service. There are rumours that he has fled the country, but his motor-car still continues to dash up and down between the station of Ris-Orangis and Champrosay (where he has a splendid house and park), with all the old dust and

insolence, endangering the lives of those who go on foot, and this with apparent impunity. The villagers shout "Boche" after the car as it goes by, but as Baumann is not in it, this is of small account. One of his chauffeurs is French, and the other is said to be Boche. It is only at night that Baumann is said to make brief visits to his château. Nearly every day the *Action Française*, which is the organ of the Royalists, under the editorship of Léon Daudet, makes a violent attack upon him.

The farmer at the seigneurie opposite, who is an officer of the Order of the Mérite Agricole, and a sincere patriot although a Radical-Socialist, cannot understand why Baumann has not yet been shot. It is strange in a way that this violent campaign against the chief notability of Champrosay (Baumann is a millionaire many times over) should be conducted by Léon Daudet, eldest son of Alphonse. It is, however, only a coincidence, for after Alphonse Daudet's death, his place at Champrosay was sold, and the family never again visited the neighbourhood. Léon Daudet has been attacking Baumann for the last four years. The chief grievance is that the Corbeil flour-mills, which are the most considerable in France, should be under the absolute management of an ex-German subject, who still has relations in Germany, is married to a German, and has introduced a number of Germans into the personnel. He is also accused of commercial irregularities which now form the object of a Parliamentary inquiry. Trafficking, or attempting to traffic, with the enemy is one of them. M. Léon Daudet is also directing an equally violent campaign against a M. Ullmann, the chair-

man of the Board of Directors of the Comptoir d'Escompte, whom he also accuses of being a German, with a thin veneer of naturalisation, and the accomplice of Baumann. It is stated by the *Action Française* that if the Germans had succeeded in getting into Paris, Ullmann had already instructions from the German Government to take in hand the financial arrangements of the forced peace which was expected to follow, while Baumann had been entrusted with the provisioning of the conquered capital. To all these charges neither Ullmann nor Baumann makes any reply, and the censor does not prevent their publication. Both Ullmann and Baumann, according to the *Action Française*, are Jews, and to this is due the occult protection in high places which prevents them from being prosecuted. In the meanwhile, Baumann takes lessons every morning from a fencing master, which in any case produces the impression that he does not mean to take M. Léon Daudet's insults for ever lying down, but is preparing to challenge him to a duel.

Bicycling over to Corbeil I nearly ran over a viper, which is the first I have seen in these regions, where they have hitherto been very rare. But one consequence of the war has been a huge increase in wild animal life all over France. The neighbouring forest of Sénart is teeming with pheasants, while rabbits start up beneath one's feet at every step. As a result of the war of 1870 the forests of Vernon and Bizy became peopled with wild boars, which have bred there in large numbers ever since, and have always made great havoc in the potato fields of the Norman farmers. The

German armies followed the forests, using them for cover, and drove the wild boars before them. This has happened again in the North of France. Though food is scarce, and the price of the rabbit, which used to be the only game within reach of the poor, has gone up from 1 franc to 2 francs 50, no killing is allowed of this plethora of game, which is certainly causing considerable damage to numberless crops. A——, who was with me, who is a Niçois, said that there are great numbers of vipers in Nice, especially on the race-course and the aviation ground. The Niçois catch them with forked sticks, and afterwards kill them and eat them. They are considered a great delicacy, and have a taste which resembles that of a capon, though finer. As a rule they are prepared "en matelote" like eels, that is to say, skinned and stewed with red or white wine. Perhaps if the problem of food becomes more difficult the people here will take to eating vipers, which, in the not very distant forest of Fontainebleau, have always been very plentiful. At the Corbeil market prices are just double what they were last year.

*Aug. 6th.*—A letter to-day from L. W——, in which he says: "En ce moment il arrive des régiments entiers d'Anglais qui viennent combattre à nos côtés." A soldier I talked to to-day, who has just returned wounded from the Western front, said that at Notre Dame de Lorette, where he was present, it was a mistake to have employed the Alpines ("the blue devils," as the Germans call them) and the Turcos, for they give no quarter, and knowing this the Germans made a much longer



resistance than would otherwise have been the case. It prevented many regiments from surrendering, as they would have been willing to do had their adversaries been of a different stamp. He said that the Germans, when they recognise that all is up with them, present a most pitiable spectacle, weeping and imploring their French captors not to kill them, shouting that they are Alsatians and have wives and numerous children. Between officers and men the relations had become very easy and cordial. But the soldiers will not advance unless the officers lead them. The prospect of another winter campaign was generally viewed with horror, and there were not a few among the men who said that sooner than go through such another experience they would prefer to shoot themselves. But this is probably all talk.

*Aug. 7th.*—The little café is closed. Madame F——, the proprietress, has gone to Paris to fetch her husband, who is on leave for four days from the front. These “permissions” have only just been granted, and the idea has been borrowed from England. For some little time past the French soldiers were feeling a little jealous of the superior facilities enjoyed by their British comrades for visiting wife and family. The leave is granted to the soldiers at the front in batches of one-third of a detachment at a time, precedence being given to fathers of families.

A number of English and American hospital nurses have arrived at Ris, which is opposite Champrosay, on the other side of the river. Both men and women are dressed in khaki, the women

with long coifs. They are busy getting ready a large house, formerly occupied by Marist Friars, for use as a hospital. One of the men to whom I spoke this evening said that the organisers of the hospital were a Mr. R—— and Sir Alan J——, who is British Minister at ——. Lady J—— is, he said, of American origin, which accounts for some of the staff being American, and also for the fact that one of the chief operators is expected to be Dr. Blake, world-famous for his surgical skill. Only very bad cases will be treated. The male nurses are men who have failed to pass the medical tests for the army, but all have their certificates for proficiency in first-aid ambulance work. My informant also told me a curious story of the house having been furnished as a hospital before the war broke out, ostensibly for Luxemburgers, but in reality for Germans, as was evident from the fact that when the German retreat began its occupants abandoned it, but took care, before doing so, to smash the dynamo, all the drainage and sanitary appliances, and the wireless apparatus which had been set up on the roof. This is a striking instance of what German espionage was capable of achieving at the very gates of Paris in peace time, and is a tribute to the intelligence and the activity of the mayor and of the local gendarmerie, who were too busy baiting and bullying their own townsfolk to pay attention to the audacious enemy working with impunity and almost openly under their very noses.

M. Hiorth, a travelled Norwegian, domiciled here, who reads the English papers, expressed his amazement to-day at the report of a speech by

Mr. George to a parcel of Welshmen, masquerading as Druids in the costumes of carnival. "What on earth," said M. Hiorth, "can have possessed your Minister to proclaim that what consoled him for the fall of Warsaw was that it foreshadowed the 'regeneration of the Russian people'! Russia! Why Russia, unregenerated Russia, by her willing submission to obligatory service, her unparalleled sacrifices in men, and her cheerful acquiescence in the total suppression of alcohol, has set a magnificent example to the world, and most of all perhaps to the drunken, unregenerate, strike-mad Welsh collier. The regeneration of Russia indeed! I like that." "Added to which," I remarked to M. Hiorth, "even Nice, the unregenerate Nice, has had the simple decency to suppress her carnival during the war-time. But the misfortune of our Liberal statesmen is that they cannot look at anything except from a pedant's or a party politician's point of view. To them everything is shop. Thus Churchill, instead of talking of the nationalisation of industry, must call it the socialisation of industry, which, of course, it isn't; and Asquith cannot bring himself to announce a national loan—it must be, in the jargon of his political shop, a 'democratic loan.' " Lloyd George has declared in an interview that the newly raised British Army is essentially a democratic army. The best proof that this is not so, is that none of the sons of these "democratic" British Ministers, who have joined it, have passed through the ranks. In Republican France the army is genuinely democratic, which does not prevent it from being perfectly disciplined. M. Viviani and M. Barthou, both Ministers, have

lost sons killed at the front as *privates*. An accurate description of a British "democratic" statesman would be (with apologies to the American humorist): A Yellow Monkey Climbing Up a Purple Stick.

A——, my Niçois friend, has this in common with every Niçois, that he has relations who are, or have been, croupiers, and have at different times wanted him to become a croupier. The "métier" is an excellent one, for, as is universally acknowledged, "le croupier gagne ce qu'il veut." I used, however, to be under the impression that his earnings, apart from his salary, large as they undoubtedly are, mainly consisted of the "pourboires" which the lucky punters traditionally present him with, and that they were entirely above-board. But A—— says that all the gambling tables at Nice are "truquées," or tricked, and that the object is to prevent the same number from coming up too often, which is the chief danger to the bank. The croupier, though he may throw the ball ("la boule" being the game played at Nice) more or less gently in order to combat this danger, cannot always be sure of success. For this reason a strong spring is concealed in the moulding of the table, which he can actuate with his knee, and thus stop the roulette at the right number. The croupier's friends, who are aware of this arrangement, watch the movement of his foot. To this precaution is due the fact that the bank at the Casino of Nice, which belongs to the municipality, is practically never broken. The Niçois would never tolerate a Municipal Council which lost money on its own tables. On the other hand, at Monte Carlo it is

not unusual for the bank to be broken, which would tend to the presumption that the play there is straightforward, or at least unaffected by springs. In any case these tales all point to the necessity, after the war, of suppressing the gambling hells, which are a disgrace to France, and infinitely more dangerous to public morality than the alcoholism which the war has so happily tended to restrain.

*Aug. 8th.*—F——, who arrived late last night, was in his café this morning, only his military trousers distinguishing him from the ordinary “bistro.” His welcome to old friends and clients was cordial, but there was a kind of reserve and absent-mindedness in his manner, an “abrutie” condition, to use his wife’s expression, which she sets down to the hardships he has undergone. She told me, when he was not present, that during the night he kept waking up, and asking her in a dazed sort of way how it was that there was no gun-firing to be heard. He has become very much thinner, which is no doubt to the advantage of his health, which is now excellent. His duties are those of a carter, and he assists in the provisioning of the trenches. This, of course, brings him frequently into the danger zone, and into contact with the men who are on the most advanced front. But his head-quarters are at B——, a town in the northern mining district, not far from Arras, and though he sleeps on straw in an improvised barracks he can take his meals at the local hotel, paying only 2 francs each for them, and they are excellent. But wine, which is not a product of the country, is extravagantly dear, a small bottle of very ordinary

claret costing 1 franc 50 centimes. Fortunes, he said, are being made by the small grocers of the locality in the sale of wine to the soldiers, and he cited the case of one woman who disposed of three barrels a day, at a clear profit of 300 francs. These people, of course, bless the war.

F—— belongs to a type of Parisian of provincial origin—his family comes from Burgundy—whose patriotism never gets the better of the instinct for personal well-being—this is the provincial note—and whose Parisian love of “blague” and mental habit of cynicism dispose them to the display of a superficial pessimism, the sincerity of which those who do not know them may easily overrate.

In F——’s opinion the “moral” of the men in the trenches left much to be desired. They were impressed with the idea that it would be impossible to break through the German defences. “Ils sont forts, les allemands, allez!” is their constant refrain. To pass another winter campaign in the trenches presented itself as a superhuman effort, of which they would not be capable, which must not even be demanded of them. To my question, “But does not that apply equally to the Germans?” F—— objected with a shrug of the shoulders: “Their trenches are much better constructed than ours.” Then when I asked him whether his comrades were really disposed to admit the possibility of the Germans definitely winning, he replied: “It is the side with the last sou that will win.”

What he himself had chiefly suffered from was lack of sleep. He confirmed the stories which have been related by many others of the amenities which

are exchanged between the French and the Boche trenches, which, however, in no respect diminish the ferocity of the fighting. There was no doubt about the Toulouse corps having refused to advance, which resulted in eight hundred of them being shot down by their own comrades. The recalcitrants had taken refuge in one or two villages, and a regular pitched battle took place, mitrailleuses and bayonet charges being employed to drive them out and exterminate them. It was owing to their defection that the attempt to pierce the German lines at Arras had failed. The Southerners, he declared, were full of talk, but there was not much fight in them.

In a general way it could be said that the feeling among the men was one of resignation, almost of despair, alternating with wild outbursts of gaiety. Where he himself is stationed, which is a few miles from the actual front, nobody talked about the war. It was only when he got near Paris that he found the war to be a general and absorbing topic of conversation. People are more alarmed here than at the front, where the war is merely looked upon as part of the day's work.

He thought that most of his comrades would be very pleased to get a slight wound which would send them home, at any rate for a time, more especially as the leave-giving was to come to an end in September.

The operations were exceedingly difficult against the strongly fortified German positions. Only a few days ago the French had lost 1500 men killed in an attack which was futile. No mention of this had been made in the "communiqués." However,

the guns of the Allies are doing great execution. In particular there is a huge British naval gun hidden in a wood near B——, which has done immense damage to the enemy's lines, and the Germans, in spite of every effort, have been unable to locate it. The big British guns are painted in check, which renders them very invisible.

F—— echoed the opinion I have already noted as prevalent among the men who are not actually at the front, nor in direct contact with the British, that the Scotch soldier is the best. The British soldiers were very well equipped, much better than the French. In his section there was not a man who had a complete uniform. He had been struck by what he called the "commerçant" spirit of the English soldiers, who were always anxious to barter something. They were constantly selling portions of their kit, socks and so forth, to the French soldiers for money, or exchanging pots of jam at the local groceries for glasses of rum. The French commissariat, in which he is personally engaged, did not seem to him to be as well organised as it might be. The food given to the men was very largely composed of rice and beans.

There had been a great deal of talk in Paris, he said, about the depredations committed by the German soldiery in the châteaux and private houses they had occupied, but the French soldiers were not immaculate in this respect. He quoted the instance of a château near Arras, where French soldiers had been billeted. They had amused themselves by damaging the valuable tapestries which it contained, daubing in comic motives on the designs.



Night bombardments had at first a demoralising effect upon the Senegalese troops. His impression was that the Indian troops were demoralised by the climate.

"I should never have believed, if it had not come under my personal observation," said F——, "that religion still exercises such enormous influence in the French army. Our lieutenant, brigadier, and 'sous-officiers' are all Jews, and their influence is such that any soldier heard making a remark offensive to the Jews would immediately be sent to the trenches as a punishment, or, to speak more exactly, as an act of vengeance. The captain, who is a blacksmith in private life, is anxious to stand well in with these Jews, of whom one is the rich banker R——, and they do what they like with him. Through him the colonel is also influenced. A short time ago a very handsome English charger broke loose from the British camp at Béthune, which is close by, and was caught by our brigadier, who is a young Jew, and kept by him. This was in spite of the fact that the British sent round a note with a description of the horse, which left us no doubt as to its identity, requesting that if found it should be returned. The captain made some mild protest to the brigadier, who, however, still retains possession of the horse, which he has practically stolen. One of these days the horse will be recognised by the rightful English owner, and then there will be a painful scandal." F——, who is a Socialist, has no prejudice against the Jews.

He had thought that all possibility of political favouritism had been banished from the army.

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since the war began, but has found out that this is a mistaken view. The director of the mines at B——, where he is stationed, has had his two sons sent home as "miners," thus taking advantage of the War Office decision which called back from the front a certain number of able-bodied men, with special knowledge, for industrial purposes. These two robust lads have never been down a mine, and are flying round the pleasure resorts of Paris in automobiles. There is no doubt, said F——, that the "embusqué" really did exist, and that money and political influence counted for much.

From where he was stationed, it was possible with field-glasses to overlook the town and neighbourhood of Liévin, which is now in the possession of the Germans, and it was a little shocking to observe the friendly relations which had sprung up between the German soldiery and a portion of the female population. Many girls could be seen strolling about arm in arm with German soldiers.

F—— brought back from the front a very pretty souvenir, which he presented to me, in the form of a "briquet," which is composed of a portion of a Boche cartridge and two British pennies, one with the head of Victoria and the other with that of Edward VII, welded together in the bronze of a Boche shell fuse. He has promised to send me a genuine aluminium ring made in the trenches with the aluminium from a Boche shell. These are getting scarce, for the Germans no longer use aluminium in the manufacture of their shells, so that many of the rings which are given away or sold as of Boche origin are in reality made from

the aluminium kitchen utensils employed by the French troops. These contain a considerable portion of lead, do not take so high a polish, and, moreover, stain the fingers.

No doubt F—— took a pessimistic view, which was more temperamental than anything else, but he redeemed it to a great extent by saying that it was the long wait in the trenches which was discouraging the men. They wanted to get at the enemy ; then they would fight with all the dash traditional with French soldiers, and the main cause of the grumbling would vanish. It is not lack of fighting spirit, but inactivity, which is at the bottom of their depression.

## CHAPTER XXIV

*Clemenceau and Hervé's discouraging campaign : A "régiment d'élite" : Confidence in Joffre : His knowledge of the soldier's psychology : A village cleared with knives of its Hun invaders : At the Bégin Hospital : René N——'s wound : Discontent with slackers : Officers' use of sticks : Lavish German expenditure of shells : Superiority of German trenches : The hotel-keeping instinct : The British soldier and discipline : The French reserves*

Aug. 10th.—“ Qui n'entend qu'une cloche n'entend qu'un son,” says the French proverb. L——'s son-in-law, Auguste G——, who in private life is a seed merchant, after having been a professor of physical culture—he is a fine athlete—is now employed near the front as a knacker. He kills for the army an incredible number of animals every day. He has an Alsatian name and claims to have Jewish blood.

His impressions interested me, for they differ to some extent from those of the soldiers I have talked to, who, while boasting of having been in the thick of the fighting, have really been some miles behind it. There are, in fact, three types of opinion, clearly characterised, that of the men in the first line of the trenches, that of the men in the third line, and that of the men who, while making occasional excursions to the front, are not really on it.

Curiously enough, pessimism increases the farther you get away from the enemy.

Auguste G—— said that the Dalbiez law had had an excellent effect upon the soldier, who had been led by M. Clemenceau and Gustave Hervé in their respective organs, *L'Homme Enchaîné* and *La Guerre Sociale*, to the discontented conviction that young men whose fathers had political influence were allowed to skulk in the rear. Of course everybody felt that the war was lasting too long, but it was only when the soldiers heard their officers grumbling, and sad to say this did occasionally happen, that they, too, became discontented. A little kindly talk, however, soon won them over. Certain regiments were more disposed to grumble than others. The sight of a "régiment d'élite" was often enough to reawaken their enthusiasm. This effect was produced by the march forward, which G—— will never forget, of the "Chasseurs à Pied," perfect in every detail. Poor fellows! Very few of them came back, but they made a splendid showing.

Auguste G—— commented on the superiority of the British equipment over that of the French. He had an immense admiration for the English soldiers with whom he had come in contact, for the frank, honest look they bore. The Frenchman's eyes, he said, are never so straight—"ils ont tous quelque chose derrière la tête." The French 75 was vastly superior to the German 77.

The army had the utmost confidence in General Joffre. Not only was he a great strategist, but he had a profound knowledge of the psychology of the soldier. Recently he had decided that an attack should be made with hand grenades and *knives* on

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a number of villages occupied by the Germans, the attacking party to be composed exclusively of territorials who were natives of these villages, and knew every brick in them. This, added to their natural instinct to clear the invader out of their homes, had precisely the effect that General Joffre had foreseen. The men attacked with the ferocity of fiends, routed out the Germans from every hole and corner, down into the cellars, and the carnage wrought upon the enemy was fearful. When it was all over and the day won, General Joffre, who had inspected the preparations, arrived with General de Dartheim, in command of the division, to view the effect, which was to some extent experimental. He stopped only a few minutes, took a glance round, and said grimly, "C'est bien, c'est tout ce que je voulais savoir." Then he took his departure. The men were immensely impressed by this brief visit.

*Aug. 11th.*—To-day I went to see, at the Hospital Bégin, René N——, to take him news of his people. The hospital, at Saint Mandé, is one of those cold, gloomy-looking places which all Paris hospitals are, with only a fairly well-kept garden to give it a note of brightness. René was seated at the end of a corridor playing cards, and if he had not risen to meet me I should not have recognised him, with his head swathed in bandages under his sub-lieutenant's cap, and the long grey-blue uniform overcoat, which accidentally happens to be of the same colour as that which French hospitals have always imposed upon their pensioners. There is a big hole in both cheeks, which has hollowed

them out, giving him a most battered appearance. He can open his jaws only just sufficiently to swallow liquid nourishment, but he can talk, and he talks just as fluently and gaily as before, with a new note of precision—what the Germans call “schneidigkeit”—due to his new habits of command. On the whole he was pessimistic. This, no doubt, was due to his wound in a large measure, and also to the feeling which is now so common among soldiers who have returned from the front, that there are too many “embusqués,” young men quite fit for active service, who, by means of political influence, have managed to get themselves drafted into the auxiliary departments. He said: “I have now no wish to go back—to get myself killed for the benefit of these other people.” This led me to ask him what was the “moral” of the troops. He said there was no longer any “élan,” that only discipline forced the men to go forward. For this reason only the non-commissioned officers carried sabres. The officers had abandoned their swords and provided themselves with sticks. This might be German fashion, but it was necessary all the same.

He had been amazed by the lavish expenditure of German shells. The Germans, he said, would fire 3000 francs' worth of shells at any man showing himself in the trenches. They invariably did so. On the other hand, they made careful use of all captured French cartridges, while the French have a habit of wasting what they capture in shells and cartridges from the Germans, either by leaving them to spoil on the ground, or by sending them home as souvenirs.

He said that the German trenches were superior to the French. The French, who are too fond of the provisional, do not construct or furnish their trenches with the same care as the Germans, who bring their natural hotel-keeping instincts to bear in securing solid safety and comfort.

He also criticised the French military hospitals, including Bégin, which were badly organised from the commissariat point of view. The patients were too numerous, and consequently the food was often ill-prepared or insufficient, or badly adapted to particular cases. He himself was very well treated, but this was due to the fact that the chief surgeon was a personal friend of his father's. Other patients only got attention when they were at the last gasp.

With regard to the English troops, he said that the general impression was that they were not disciplined enough. The consequence was that they sometimes endangered the success of the French military plans. For instance, on one occasion they had created such a noise with their games and amusements in a village near to an important French position, that they had attracted the German fire, and the French had suffered in the result. He held that it was owing to the inferiority of their discipline that the British did not go forward when ordered by their officers to do so, with the same promptitude and unquestioning obedience as the French soldiers do; but I gathered that he had never actually seen the British soldiers in action.

The recent French losses, he said, had been enormous. Several classes had been entirely wiped out. The youngest class, in particular, had dis-



played a reckless bravery which had resulted in its total destruction. He feared that this would soon result in an exhaustion of the French reserves, and it was beginning to be a question now where would the new men who were needed be procurable.

Generally speaking, the French commissariat arrangements were very inferior to the British. The food often reached the trenches cold, or after having been rained on, which made it unpalatable ; but recently there had been considerable improvement.

## CHAPTER XXV

*The forthcoming big attack on the West : Fall of Kovno : Letter from Jack S——'s mother : His glorious career : Price of provisions : A wounded soldier's confidence in victory : The British encampments in Normandy : A "prise d'armes" at the Sanatorium : "Fritz le Uhlan" : Suppression of furloughs : Cardinal Gibbons : Ambition to be Pope : Pessimistic territorials : Socialists in the army*

*Aug. 12th.*—Reflection : Is it to be expected that Militarism based on Patriotism, which prevails in Germany, is going to be beaten by the Anarchism based on Egoism, which seems to be dominant in the political conditions of England ?

*Aug. 16th.*—An artillery officer, whom I had a short chat with to-day, says that the general attack on the Western front is to be made very soon.

*Aug. 18th.*—A painful impression has been locally produced here by the fall of Kovno. There is a notion that Russia is on her last legs. I have sought to combat this feeling by arguing that the German advance in Russia is really nothing more than the sortie of a besieged garrison, which, owing to its inevitable desperate character, may easily have a temporary success. Germany is, in spite of every-

thing that the Germans may say, a besieged place, which must, like Kovno, fall in its turn. After all, General de Mouravieff Amoursky, who maintained this theory in his lectures at Nice, was, in spite of subsequent events which seemed to contradict his optimism, entirely right.

*Aug. 19th.*—A pathetic letter from Mrs. S——, the mother of poor Jack S——, in answer to mine on her son's death. She is now in Cashmere. She tells me that he had been in Flanders with a Naval Brigade, was slightly wounded twice, and won his promotion to the rank of lieutenant-commander for gallantry in rescuing (with a party of bluejackets) seventeen wounded men from the cellars of a house that was ablaze from shell-fire. It was about that time that he got concussion of the brain from the effects of a shell bursting close to him. Appointed second in command of the Anson Battalion R.N.D., he subsequently went with Sir Ian Hamilton's Expeditionary Force to the Dardanelles. He was wounded in the assault on Sedd-el-Bahr. Jack's ambition had been to join the Indian Marine, and his mother's to be in India near him. But, as the poor lady writes: "What boots it to make any more plans now?"

*Aug. 20th.*—Prices for provisions are increasing in the neighbourhood by leaps and bounds. At Corbeil market the average increase is about 300 per cent. Jambon d'York is now at 4s. a pound, and one lady pork butcher told me that she was ashamed to offer it at such a price, but in reality they made no profit on it. At the Hôtel des Ponts, where

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there used to be an excellent ordinary at 2 francs a head, the proprietress said that she could no longer afford to supply her former customers with food.

A wounded soldier, who is being treated at the Champrosay Sanatorium, said to me this afternoon with great conviction, " Nous les aurons ! " (" We'll get them ! ") He was very bitter in his criticism of the behaviour of the 17th Corps, mainly recruited at Toulouse, whose refusal to advance had spoilt an important French attack near Arras. " Ah, ces Gascons ! " (" Ah, those Gascons ! ") They were utterly lacking in patriotism, he maintained, and were in the habit of saying : " Our country [meaning the South of France] is not invaded, why should we bother about the North ? " Their defection, however, was, he thought, largely due to their officers, who were even worse than the men. The corps, or what has been left of it, has now been furnished with officers of Northern French origin, who are more energetic and disciplined, and the men work much better.

*Aug. 25th.*—Soldiers who have been on furlough in Normandy and on the Manche coast have brought back enthusiastic descriptions of the vast British encampments which extend from Boulogne, Calais, and Le Havre practically to Rouen. They greatly admire the perfection of the British equipment.

*Aug. 30th.*—An amusing and touching ceremony took place this afternoon in the park of the Sanatorium—a fine place which originally belonged to General Ledru des Essarts, one of Napoleon's

generals, and the ancestor of my old friend B——. On the glowing lawn, surrounded by ancient trees, were seated in a circle the wounded soldiers upon whom the military medal and the war cross were to be conferred. With an unpunctuality which is probably more military than is proverbially supposed, a little retired General humorously named Lelong, of the size and much of the appearance of the late Marshal Roberts, arrived to the sound of bugles, and after a long speech, which was delightfully subversive to the present regime, and highly complimentary to the sisters of the Sanatorium who act as nurses, he embraced each hero, and among them was a priest, and then pinned on to his breast, in the name of the President of the Republic, the decoration which was his due. And each time the bugles blew. Then he made a tour of the other patients seated on the lawn, and had an encouraging word for all. Afterwards a one-act play entitled *Fritz le Uhlan* was played on an out-door stage, proving once more, what everybody knows, that every Frenchman is a born actor. Fritz the Uhlan is an Alsatian who, captured by the French, unmasks and bayonets a spy among his fellow-prisoners. The priest who was decorated was a bearded missionary, whose many medals include the one which is equivalent to our Victoria Cross.

*Sept. 1st.*—To the sorrow of relatives all “permissions” (furloughs) are, we learn to-day, suppressed, and the “permissionnaires” are being sent back earlier than the date originally granted to them for the expiration of their leave. Letters

from abroad are being held up for forty-eight hours. The postman said to-day that he had very few letters to deliver. All this points to a great move shortly to be made on the Western front. Moreover, the furloughs have not had quite the result that was expected. Many of the men have been discouraged at the apparent indifference with which Paris treats the war, and feel that their sacrifices are not appreciated at their full value.

*Sept. 3rd.*—There seems to be a complete misapprehension in England, to judge from the attitude of the papers, as to the impression which is produced here by the appearance on the political scene of Cardinal Gibbons, who is supposed to be acting as a kind of intermediary between the Pope and Mr. Wilson, with a view of proposing terms of peace. The French Government and the French nation will always set their faces firmly against papal intervention. The war has certainly had the effect of calming much of the bitterness which previously prevailed between clericals and anti-clericals of French nationality, but it has left the position of Rome precisely where it was. The regain of popularity by the French priesthood is in direct proportion with the degree in which it has proved itself to be patriotically French and in the same measure less Roman. The two personages who might by their respective positions, the one as the head of a sister republic which owes its existence to France, and the other as the professed Vicar of Christ, have honestly protested against the German invasion of France and the trampling of every civilised Christian principle in the mire, *and have failed to do so*

effectively, are without doubt objects of unqualified contempt in this country. It is part of their curious "inconscience" that they do not seem yet to have realised this. But they will have to sooner or later, and, moreover, the feeling against them is growing stronger every day. Cardinal Gibbons is also about the last person in the world to be usefully employed as a go-between in negotiations which concern Great Britain. He has always been inspired by the animosity and hatred towards the English, which is the spirit animating the American Catholic priesthood as a whole, and probably without a single individual exception. The dependence of the Catholic Church in the United States on the contributions of the Catholic Irish is the plain explanation of this, supposing there were no personal prejudice involved. Cardinal Gibbons, whom I met years ago at the house of his cousin, the Marquise d'Oyley (of the famous Evans family), made no secret of his Anglophobe feelings, and they were so thoroughly the logical outcome of his situation, creed, and interests that they gave no offence. He was at that time nourishing the ambition to become the first American Pope, which gives a fair idea of the degree of accuracy with which he was able to gauge the political situation in Europe in general, and of the Vatican in particular. There is a chance, too, that Orthodox Russia might beg the Pope and his Cardinal to go about their business arm in arm with the Methodist Wilson.

*Sept. 5th.*—L—— gave a lunch to-day, to which I was specially invited, to hear the views and the experiences of his two nephews who have just

arrived on furlough from the theatre of war. It partook of the nature of a family council, for both soldiers were accompanied by their wives. They were typical "territorials," both employees of the middle class, who had reached almost the limit of the military age. Neither had been engaged on the actual front, but at about twenty miles in the rear. The elder, Lazare, the more composed and reasonable of the two, retained a certain amount of optimism ; the younger, Paul, is what the French call a "raisonneur," and was full of bitter criticism. A frantic Socialist, he has no vision beyond his own personal interests, discomforts, and grievances. Both were agreed that all the French troops at the front were extremely eager for peace. Paul even said that in the first line of trenches the opinion was commonly expressed that the sooner the Germans got to Paris the better, for then peace would come quicker. Lazare's wife was indignant at this, and refused to believe it ; but Paul insisted that it was so. It might not be patriotic, he declared, but that was what was being said. He proceeded to express his own opinion that Germany had proved herself to be the first Power in the world, and that the German army was in every way superior to the French. It was a matter of indifference to him whether he was Boche or French, for supposing that he were badly wounded when he got back home, he might get a little cheap sympathy for a short time, but in the long run no one would care a pin, and he would be left to his own resources ; of that he was sure. He accompanied his remarks with outbursts of shrill ironical laughter, and frequent exclamations of " O, là,



là ! ” He represented the officers as skulkers, and said that when they ordered their men to charge, but themselves tried to stop behind, the men refused to move, or if the men had advanced and then discovered that the officers were not in front of them, they returned to the trenches. Lazare demurred somewhat to this, but said that at the beginning of the war the discovery had been made that many officers had been *bought* by the Germans. They were principally men of German origin, who had been settled in France, and their treachery had caused more than one disaster. For instance, the fort of Manœuvrier had been treacherously surrendered by the French commandant, who was in German pay, and this had prevented the French from succeeding in their first attack on Alsace. The commandant had been subsequently court-martialled and shot, but the mischief had been done. Paul maintained that the “moral” of the French troops at the front was as bad as could be, and as for Joffre, “O, là, là ! ” no one had any more belief in or consideration for him. Paul cited as a proof of the German superiority that as soon as a French post was spotted by the Germans a perfect hail of shells was rained on it, but when the French located a German position a long exchange of telephonic communications began between officer and officer, no one assuming sufficient responsibility to give an order, so that often half an hour elapsed before the firing began, during which the Germans had had time to move out of danger. Both men criticised the French aviation service on the ground that the French had too few big aeroplanes carrying mitrailleuses to oppose to the Germans, but were

only provided with observation planes which could do no serious damage; these always took flight when the big German planes made their appearance. They held that the French aviators were too much of the sportsman type. Both had the idea that the English were not soldiers, "*comme nous*" ("Perhaps that's just as well," was my tacit comment), with the same training, but sailormen, superior indeed as seamen to the French sailors, but inferior in the field. They left their trenches with difficulty when ordered to do so—this again being due to inferior discipline—and were always grumbling at the lack of comfort. Neither of these Frenchmen, however, had witnessed a charge of British troops, and they were only repeating a vague report, the origin of which may be a desire in some quarters to keep alive the old hostility towards the English in France. For the same reason they had adopted the theory that the best troops in the British (or, as they always term it, the English) Army are the Scotch. Both Lazare and Paul were convinced that the war would be settled by money, the victory would fall to those who could hold out longest financially; but both sneered at the idea that the Allies would ever be able to enter Germany, or that peace would be signed at Berlin.

Paul's wife showed herself to be fully in sympathy with her husband's pessimism, while Lazare's wife, on the contrary, was uncompromisingly patriotic, and contemptuous and angry that the two soldiers showed themselves to be so downhearted. I—wound up the conversation by asking his nephew: "But, my dear Lazare, if it be true that you soldiers

want peace at any price, what is to become of the nation? Are you satisfied with the idea of our all becoming Prussians?" Thereupon Lazare replied: "No, uncle; but the war is lasting too long; we have had enough of it." To which Paul's wife added triumphantly, "Voilà!" This conversation derives its interest from the fact that it represents the point of view of a class which is numerous in France, from which the territorials are almost exclusively drawn. The womenkind, wholly absorbed in money-making, have no national feeling, and they are even incapable of reasoning on any other subject than pence. The men have not been to the real front, so that no very imminent danger or absolute hardship has steeled their characters to the point of enabling them to despise minor misfortunes and small troubles. They have literally not yet realised the war. Such Frenchmen have, of course, a large number of prototypes in our own country. The "moral" of the army as a whole must not be judged from them.

## CHAPTER XXVI

*Views from the real front : An optimistic gunner : Grand qualities of the " 105 long " : Attitude of the Bavarians : A French soldier's pay : The Canadian button : Popularity of English mustard : Peace in November say the French, in June say the English : Indifference of Paris : The Baumann scandal continues : The Minister of the Interior shakes hands with Baumann : Tragedy of the Hervaux family : Scandalous talk of a college professor : What influences Wilson : International debates*

Sept. 6th.—An entirely different aspect of the situation was presented to-day by L. W——, who paid me a visit during his short furlough from the front. He is at the *real* front—"le front vrai," as he calls it—and everything he said was in direct contradiction to the "grousing" tales of Messieurs Lazare and Paul. The "moral" of the troops, he said, was excellent. The undoubted hardships were cheerfully borne in the conviction that victory for the Allies was certain in the long run. He had been only slightly wounded twice, but had suffered from dysentery owing to bad water. He made light of all these ills. He showed the pride of an artist in his guns. His 105 fires shell weighing 14 kilos 500 grammes (approximately 28 pounds), to a distance of 12 to 14 kilometres, and even to

16, but the aim then becomes irregular. The shots are from 8 to 10 a minute. There is a curious belief among the French artillerymen that this 105 gun was invented by the famous Dreyfus, and was first of all exclusively manufactured for the Russians. Owing to the complexities of the Dreyfus "affair" the French authorities were shy of adopting it, thinking that it might not be a good gun, but it has turned out to be in many respects superior to the much-vaunted, and undoubtedly marvelously effective, 75. As the 75's do not carry beyond 6 kilometres, the 105's are often placed in front of them for the purposes of intensive bombardment of distant enemy positions. Thus the gunners of the "105 long de l'artillerie lourde" are much more exposed than is generally believed.

L—— related many of the anecdotes, with which we are all now familiar, of the amenities which have been exchanged at different times between the opposing trenches. The Germans made a terrific bombardment on the 14th of July, the French national fête day, when the French were singing the "Marseillaise" and other patriotic ditties, but, as a rule, they stop and listen if the French singer happens to be exceptionally good. Of their cowardly brutality, however, there had been many instances. On one occasion they tied up twenty-five French prisoners belonging to the 12th Corps, in view of their French comrades, and abominably tortured them. The men of the 12th Corps put their unhappy countrymen out of their misery with gun-fire, but after that they took no more German prisoners. Contrary to the statement of Lazare and Paul, L—— said that the Bavarians avoided firing on the

French soldiers as much as possible, and gave the French warning when they were to be replaced by Prussians, for whom they openly expressed their detestation. From a comparison between the different tales on this subject the conclusion is to be drawn that the Bavarians, who were noted for their brutality in 1870, have maintained, "et au delà," their old reputation for cowardly barbarity when they have had to deal with British troops, but have in some cases, though by no means in all, shown a certain tenderness towards the French.

L—— has been for some time in contact with British troops, mostly Canadians, and is enthusiastic about them. He admires their buttons, which by an ingenious contrivance can be made to lie flat on the uniform when the soldier is prone on them, while the French soldier's button, not having a flexible eyelet, sticks into his flesh if he presses on it; and he admired more than anything their scale of pay, which ran into 3 francs a day, and more, while the poor Frenchman still has to be contented with a halfpenny. This sou a day was the only grievance as to which L—— was in agreement with Lazare and Paul. That the French equipment, so far as uniform is concerned, still leaves something to be desired was shown by the huge pair of corduroy trousers which L—— was wearing, which made a constant noise as he walked, exactly like that of a horse munching hay. "C'est agaçant," he remarked drearily. On the other hand, he is convinced that the French now have the superiority in artillery over the Germans. A great move forward by the French, which is to be prepared by very lengthy artillery bombardment,

night and day, is in preparation. "Nous les aurons!" asserted L——. He brought me about ten pounds weight of souvenirs from the battle-field, mostly portions of German shells. In my turn I have promised to supply his battery with English mustard, which his comrades prefer to any other, because it is in powder and does not get mouldy in the trenches like the liquid French mustard.

The bad metal of which the German shrapnel bullet was made caused suppuration of wounds and gangrene, which made healing difficult.

He had been in the great battle near Arras, when, owing to the defection of the 17th Corps, the French advance had failed. The 17th Army Corps formed the reserve to two other army corps, who were destined to make the famous "trouée." They refused to advance, and thus spoilt the manœuvre as well as causing great loss of life. It was impossible to pursue the beaten foe.

His French comrades are of the opinion that peace will be concluded in November, but the English troops fix the date in June.

There are large detachments of Indian troops close to where L——'s battery is stationed, but he says they keep very much to themselves, and wear a melancholy look as if they were homesick, but they are very good fighters. A curious result, according to L——, of the Italians having joined in the war is that the French army is now inundated with "pâtes italiennes." The men are given macaroni every day in the morning, and spaghetti or "nouilles" in the evening, and the monotony of this diet is very trying. The English, on the other

hand, are never given macaroni more than once a day.

On the whole L—— will be glad to get back to the front. "I am bored here," he said. "Nobody pays any attention to you, and the noise in the streets is irritating. I want to return to the sound of the guns." Poor L——! He does not think that he will ever see his home again.

*Sept. 7th.*—The mysterious figure of Baumann, the director of the great Corbeil Flour Mills, who still flies about the country in an automobile, and is credited with having made another huge fortune by a grain deal with the Government at the beginning of the war, was the chief subject of discussion at a luncheon to-day given by Hiorth, at which the notabilities of Champrosay and Ris-Orangis were present. The station-master expressed the opinion that Baumann encouraged local effort, and gave employment to the inhabitants. The fact, however, that he has made no reply to the various allegations of espionage and fraud against him, which Lucien Daudet publishes almost daily in the *Action Française*, is not in his favour. What is obvious is that if the director of the Moulins de Corbeil made a fraudulent deal with the "Intendance Militaire" (in other words, the War Office), it must have been with the connivance of personages high in office, and this probably explains why he has not been cited before a court-martial. The banker, Louis Dreyfus, who is one of the principal promoters of the Socialist paper *L'Humanité*, was also accused in the Chamber by the Chamber's own reporter of complicity in this alleged fraudulent deal, and



of having attempted to trade with the enemy, but he apparently enjoys the same immunity from prosecution as his accomplice Baumann. Both are Jews.

*Sept. 8th.*—A huge automatic plough was experimented with this afternoon at Rigny, on the slopes of Ris. All the representatives of the local agricultural interest were present in their Sunday clothes, for M. Malvy, the Minister of the Interior, was expected. The machine seems to have given disappointing results on account of its excessive cumbersomeness, but it was noted that Baumann was present, and that M. Malvy, who is the representative in the Cabinet of the Caillaux party, made a point of shaking hands with him.

*Sept. 11th.*—Monsieur Hervaux is a professor at the Deaf and Dumb School in Paris. His son Daniel has just taken his B.A., and after a recent sojourn in England talks English quite nicely, and is particularly fond of a singularly absurd comic song which he heard in London, with a refrain of "Get out and get under." He is always, apparently at any rate, in the highest spirits, except when he recalls the memory of his "poor village," as he calls it. This place, Moisan, which *was* situated near Soissons, has been entirely destroyed by the Germans. His grandfather, nearly eighty, was the deputy-mayor. The Germans beat him to death with the butt-ends of their rifles. His uncle was taken off into captivity to Germany, where he was deliberately starved and ill-treated to such an extent that, though a robust man in the prime

of life, he, too, died. The fact that he was only half a day in hospital before dying shows how these Boche assassins dealt with the sick prisoners. A few days previous to his death he was able to communicate with his brother by stealth, and told him to give up all hope of seeing him again. He added that all the other civilian men prisoners in the camp had died off one by one, and he was the only one left. It must be added that every single inhabitant of the village had been carried off. The Germans in their retreat did not leave a soul behind. Daniel's grandmother, also nearly eighty, after all kinds of cruelties and privations, which she survived by a miracle, was finally released into Switzerland, whence she returned to France. His girl cousin narrowly escaped being mishandled by the German soldiers. Every piece of furniture in the place was burnt in a huge bonfire by the Boche invaders, apparently as a kind of patriotic German protest against the superiority of French taste.

In curious contrast with these undoubted facts are the comments upon them of one of Daniel's professors at the Lycée——, the professor of German, a type of the Socialist pedant, who thinks it a sign of superior intelligence to love the enemy. It is specially in the pedagogue class that the type is to be found, and there are numerous specimens in England. Behind the dirty little mask of broad-mindedness you will always detect the coward, the bully, and the sneak. This instructor of youth is, needless to say, an "embusqué," or shirker. He has managed so far to elude his military service. In his lessons to his pupils he endeavours to convince them that the Germans are not in the wrong. All

the hair-splitting pedantry of the French "intellectuel," originally borrowed from Germany, is made to serve for this purpose. "The Germans," he declares, "are wrongly accused of having devastated the villages and towns through which they have passed. 'Devastate' means 'giving to a place the aspect of a desert,' and the Germans have always left *something* standing." This was to demonstrate to Daniel how completely wrong he was to describe as an act of wanton barbarity the complete destruction of his native village, Moisan. Then again the Germans have never pillaged. "Piller," according to this pestilent jackass, means to take something that you don't need. The Germans only took what was essential to their existence! The fact that Daniel's grandfather and uncle had been deliberately murdered by the Boches in no way altered the professor's conviction that the Germans were conducting the war in a perfectly humane way, for he simply refused to believe it. "Did you actually see these things done?" "No!" "Then you have no right to believe them." As Daniel had protested with some force against this preposterous contention, the professor—and this is where this typical traitor revealed himself as both a bully and a sneak—secretly wrote notes on Daniel's class work to the B.A. examiners, calculated to get him ploughed. In this he was unsuccessful, but the true quality of the ruffian was thereby amply demonstrated.

Sept. 13th.—M. Joseph Reinach, who wrote a history of the Dreyfus case, which even Maître Labori—the defender of Zola—described as a work of prejudice and hatred, publishes daily war

criticisms in the *Figaro* under the pseudonym of "Polybe." *Poor Polybius!* One of the papers published in English here is endeavouring to convince its English readers that these articles represent the last word in discriminating military knowledge and exalted patriotism. It can only be hoped that the English, under the guidance of this paper, will not make another idol out of "Boule de Juif," as the late Henri Rochefort nicknamed him, as they have done for Clemenceau, and accept what he says as voicing popular or official opinion in France. To-day he refers with apparent amiability to England as the land "where blow the broad winds of that other liberty, which is the sea without limits." What the article insidiously seeks to suggest to the French reader is that France should associate herself with the German ambition to deprive England of her mastery of the seas as one of the conditions of peace. Unfortunately more than one responsible English statesman has shown an inclination to make concessions in this quarter. English people would do well not to place excessive confidence in the flatteries of "Polybe."

*Sept. 14th.*—A letter from Comte Jean de B——, at the front, in which he says: "In a short time we shall take the offensive. I should have been so pleased to see you once more before the decisive blow. At the present moment we are digging trenches day and night; we only get just the necessary sleep. I fear that if we do not succeed this time in hurling the Boches back into their country we shall never manage it. But I think that

this time it is 'la bonne' [the deciding throw], and I have great confidence."

There is a famous old angler, Monsieur Renault, who frequents this part of the river. He is a type of the old-fashioned Republican, and is high up in Freemasonry. In fact the bond of sympathy between us is not angling, but the great admiration which he entertains for my dear friend, Charles Malato, the celebrated Anarchist, who is a member of his own lodge. This afternoon a procession of little schoolgirls, accompanied by their teachers, arrived at Champrosay to spend the afternoon in the forest. They sang as they marched, and old Renault asked them to sing the "Marseillaise." "You will see," he said to me, "that the mistress will forbid them." And he was right. They sang "Mourir pour la patrie!" which is a patriotic hymn, but not the national anthem of the French Republic. "And don't tell me after that," said old M. Renault with bitterness, and raising his arms in the air, "that clericalism has been crushed as a political and educational force in France!"

*Sept. 19th to Sept. 24th.*—Everybody has learned that it is the plan of the Allied artillery to rain shells on the Boche positions on the Western front for seven consecutive days and nights, and if that does not smash up the Germans, the general idea is that nothing will. However, the hopes of success are high.

M——, who is the Paris correspondent of the —— group of papers in the United States, and claims to be an old friend of the Wilson family, has told me that the explanation of Wilson's attitude

towards Germany, which is in opposition to all decent American opinion, must be sought for in the light of the French adage, "*Cherchez la femme!*" Wilson was, he says, on bad terms with his late wife, who, on the eve of his election to the Presidency, was on the point of divorcing him. This would have meant his political ruin at the time, and in response to his supplications she consented to forgo the action, but she had always refused to figure in any of the social functions at the Presidency. Very shortly after Wilson's election she died, almost suddenly, from diabetes. The chief cause of the dissension between Wilson and his late wife had been his friendship with a Mrs. H——, the widow of a well-known New York banker. After his wife's death, Wilson arranged to marry Mrs. H——, who is very wealthy (and Wilson is poor), but Mrs. H—— insisted as a condition that he should be re-elected for a second term to the Presidency, as she was anxious to cut a splendid figure as the mistress of the White House. This is why Wilson has been so anxious to conciliate the German-American vote. But now another situation has arisen. Miss Wilson, the President's daughter, revered the memory of her late mother, and has put her foot down so decisively as regards Mrs. H—— that in order to avoid a family scandal Wilson has had to jilt her. But his clever daughter has brought forward a substitute, a personal friend of her own, a Mrs. G——, who is also very wealthy, but does not make it an absolute condition that her future husband should be re-elected President. So there is a strong probability that Wilson's attitude towards the Central Powers will be less servile

in future. The Almighty Dollar, and the Almighty Female ! And this is Puritan Wilson !

*Sept. 25th to Sept. 30th.*—A remark typical of a very general way of thinking among the French middle classes was made to me to-day at Corbeil by the proprietor of the Hôtel des Petits Ponts, which is just opposite the great flour mills. "So you have lost your good Monsieur Baumann !" I had said to him. Baumann, formerly director of the mills, had resigned on account of allegations of fraud and espionage, and being also a Boche. "What do you expect me to say ?" cried the inn-keeper excitedly. "He did good throughout the neighbourhood. All the workmen liked him." If what he was accused of is true, however, he might have shown a different side to his character after the Germans had got to Corbeil, where, by the way, they were hourly expected in September 1914.

Referring to the pessimists, some of them from the front, whose talk depresses the inhabitants here, my former landlord, L——, said to-day : "Don't listen to them, monsieur ; it's *the people who don't talk* whom you should listen to." He added : "After the victory they will have changed their opinions."

L. W—— writes on behalf of the gunners of his battery of 150 mm. long guns to thank me for having supplied them with English mustard.

*Oct. 1st to Oct. 10th.*—Two weird-looking Breton soldiers, one a Fusilier Marin, and the other a Zouave—both natives, in fact, of Saint Malo, and, therefore, bound together by ties of deep affection

(the elder, who was the less excited of the two, told me that he cared for his younger companion like a mother)—appeared at Champrosay to-day. The younger one had the face of a pretty girl, but with wild, staring, insane eyes, and as he was a terrible stammerer, and his utterance, moreover, was thick from another cause, he related his adventures at the front mainly by means of the most fantastic and blood-curdling pantomime that I have ever witnessed. He had been a "joyeux" when the war broke out, that is to say, he belonged to the special corps (known also as the Bat d'Af) stationed in Africa, into which condemned criminals are drafted. He owed this disgrace to having murdered somebody at Saint Malo, his girl, or his rival in the girl's affections, or both, it was not quite clear which, for his barkings and caperings, though horribly eloquent on the whole, were often incomprehensible. As a volunteer he had been able to exchange into the Zouaves, for it had been at first intended not to bring the "joyeux" to Europe. And this had been the saving of his life so far. For when the Bat d'Af were sent to the front, the particular regiment to which he had belonged was massacred to the last man, being ambushed by mitrailleuses after a magnificent bayonet charge which they made against the German trenches. He was with the Zouaves who came up after them, and found them—his former comrades—filling the German trenches, but all dead. The Breton was badly wounded, and cited in the order of the day of the army for special gallantry. This gave him a claim to the War Medal with a palm, but being cured he had waived this right, owing to the long



formalities involved, in order to get back quicker to the front. He and his friend were leaving that night. The Fusilier Marin could tell me nothing about the manner of P. D——'s death, for he had not belonged to his company, but he said that the naval officers who had commanded the Fusiliers Marins had all fought like lions. They had set an example to the whole army. No such reckless bravery had been seen in any other corps, and their men were devoted to them as no other soldiers were. This confirms all that I knew and expected of P. D—— and his other naval comrades who commanded companies at Dixmude, *and of whom not one remains.*

Owing to the absence of a general diplomatic understanding or control between the Powers of the Quadruple Alliance, the problems connected with the Dardanelles and Salonica are becoming very complex, and something in the nature of a crisis is pending. The French regard the situation in this way. The British, they say, attacked the Dardanelles to counter the threatened Turkish invasion of Egypt. Now that Egypt is no longer threatened with invasion this reason does not hold good. But they were also very anxious to provision Russia with ammunition by means of a free passage through the Dardanelles. On the other hand, they have no wish for the Italians to install themselves in Constantinople, and want to limit the Italian effort to the invasion of Macedonia. For this reason they are opposed to Italian co-operation at Salonica. A sort of deadlock has resulted, and M. Viviani has, on the advice of the British Ambassador, himself gone to London to see the members

of the British Government, for it is urgent to arrive at a solution. The urgency is largely due to the fact that intriguing old M. Clemenceau has obtained the signatures of a majority of the members of the Army Commission in the Senate to the demand for a secret sitting of the Senate, at which he will insist that all the Allies, including Italy, should be equally called upon to go to the aid of Serbia. If M. Viviani does not come back with the consent of the British Government to this policy, M. Clemenceau will, at the secret sitting (should it take place), put the Government in a minority, and perhaps overturn it. What further complicates matters is that both Generals Joffre and Cadorna, and Marshal French have all set their faces strongly against any withdrawal of troops from the fronts which they respectively command.

*Oct. 11th.*—Viviani is back from England and is to make a statement on the Balkan situation to-day. He has baulked M. Clemenceau's intrigue for a secret sitting of the Senate. The French statesmen opposed to the Salonica expedition, and they form an influential group, maintain that the whole Balkan question concerns the British almost exclusively, for only Indian and Egyptian interests are bound up in it. Therefore the British should make it their affair. To which the British are alleged to reply: That would be all very well if our army were at our complete disposition instead of being, as it is, mainly occupied in helping to drive the Germans from French and Belgian territory. The almost certain outcome of these "tiraillements," a useful French word which corresponds to friendly

differences, will be the withdrawal from the Cabinet of M. Delcassé, whose diplomatic illness is already announced this afternoon. Moreover, apart from his abilities and policy, M. Delcassé is unpopular in the Chamber for personal reasons.

*Oct. 12th.*—The British Red Cross organisation in Paris does not seem to have been as successful as its admirers expected. I hear that its hospitals are closed, that its staff has gone home, and that it now possesses in Paris only a sort of cloak-room. Another case of failure through amateurism was told me this afternoon by Miss D——. She had been connected with an organisation at the Paris offices of an English bank for tracing soldiers who have disappeared. The staff was composed almost entirely of highly paid, though well-to-do English women, who did little, however, beyond drawing their unearned and unneeded salaries, and taking tea at Rumpelmayer's. The British Government suppressed the organisation. The only woman who worked was also the only one who needed her wages, and she has been kept on to do all that is henceforth required. She slaves like a nigger. Miss D—— says, as the result of her own experience with these people, that she will never work for English people again, only for Americans in future (she is a polyglot steno-dactylographist), for they "did her in the eye." Her own compatriots! She was before the war a fervid patriot, and she is much distressed when she thinks of these things.

A letter from the Countess, announcing that Maurice N——, the eldest son of my Nice friends, the N——s, has been killed at the front.

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*Oct. 19th to Oct. 27th.*—A letter from Comte J. de B——,\* announcing his departure with the French contingents to Serbia.

A soldier, a native of Champrosay, who is here on furlough, said that the Germans answered every French bombardment at the front shell for shell, but always had the last word. He modified the discouraging impression produced by this statement by adding that great progress had nevertheless been made, and that the French had now but to take the forts of Angres and Corneilles, to surround and recapture Lille, after which there would only be the plain before them. Then the German debacle would begin. Similar enveloping tactics would sooner or later force the Germans to quit Soissons. The Germans had no longer any hope of advancing. In the Boche trenches which had been taken at the Battle of Champagne "A bas la guerre" was found to be written all over them.

\* Comte J. de B—— was cited in the orders of the day, and decorated on the battle-field with the War Medal on November 20 at Debrista in Serbian Macedonia. This was nine days after the French disembarkment at Krivolak.

## CHAPTER XXVII

*A new French Ministry : German prisoners : The new pneumatic gun : The shirker scandal : Problems of peace : The United States and Germany : Scurvy and frozen meat : French and British equipment compared : Reprisals for German treachery : Seeing red : An Alsatian traitor : Two million French wounded : Clemenceau's politics : His disastrous influence*

Oct. 28th.—On arriving in Paris this afternoon I found all the midday editions of the papers sold out at the "métro" bookstall, for the excitement over the Ministerial crisis is intense. G——, whom I met in the afternoon, shares my view that if General Gallieni becomes Minister of War, it will not be long before the situation of General Joffre will be altered. The other members of Briand's Cabinet are very old men, so old that their past history is almost forgotten. There is Méline, who represents the agricultural moderates, but who was originally (and who remembers that?) a member of the Commune. Then there is De Freycinet, who must be now very feeble, who reorganised the French Army after 1870. The German Military Attaché used to express to me more than twenty-five years ago an admiration for him, which being German may not have been wholly sincere. Millerand,

the ex-Minister of War, and Ribot are both credited with having excited great personal enmity among the Deputies on account of their imperious ways. Millerand goes, but Ribot remains. Then there is Malvy, who is to remain at the Ministry of the Interior, the "âme damnée" of Caillaux, who thus still retains his strong hold on public affairs. Denys Cochin is a Royalist. Evidently M. Briand's object is to secure as large a majority in the Chamber as possible, and above all to guard against surprises, against that famous "pélure d'orange" upon which so many Cabinets have slipped up. It is a constantly recurring phenomenon when parties are too narrowly divided.

G—— remarked that it was an indication of the difference of political methods which has so often been regarded as preventing a clear common understanding between France and England, that while the English were proposing to reduce their Cabinet the French were increasing the size of theirs, both with the idea of arriving at more practical results.

G—— introduced to me a Major L——, who has just relinquished the command of a German prisoners' camp. Major L—— said that the Germans were extraordinarily arrogant so long as any notice was taken of them. The visit of a neutral commission of inspection always resulted in acts of insubordination. But it sufficed to imprison for a few days the "fortes têtes," after which they became meek as lambs. What had surprised him most was the amazing capacity of the Germans for eating grease. They loaded it up on to thin slices of bread, or devoured it just as it was. It had been ascertained that forbidden objects, letters, etc.,

were frequently concealed in the packets of grease sent to the German prisoners by their friends in Germany, so a French non-commissioned officer was given the duty of going through the packet, which he, as a rule, did with his fingers. Then when the prisoner had received his grease he isolated himself to eat it, thus avoiding the necessity of dividing it with his comrades, and doubtless for the same reason gobbled it up with such avidity that indigestion was often the result. A rein had been put upon this excess by dietary and medical measures of so radical a nature that the German prisoner now no longer gorged himself with fat and sausage to the extent of having a claim on the infirmary. The German prisoners were mainly disciplined by their own non-commissioned officers, whose tyranny he had had frequent occasion to repress or modify.

In the train on my way back to Champrosay was a young soldier, who had been seven months at the front. He asked two typical people of the locality seated opposite to him: "La guerre vous a-t-elle beaucoup affecté à Paris?" ("Has the war much affected you in Paris?"). "Seulement pour les vivres" ("Only for provisions"), they both replied. The other French people in the carriage murmured confirmation of this, and, oddly enough, most of them were in mourning! The soldier looked a little puzzled. Prices for provisions, they added, had gone up considerably, but not so far as to cause any very serious inconvenience.

*Oct. 29th.*—A letter from L. W——, in which he says: "Here all is going well. We continue to pound away with the guns night and day, and you

may expect some sensational events in a short time from now. In the last attack I had several comrades wounded at my side. . . . The weather is very cold, but we have no time to freeze. We have no more mustard, and if you could send me one or two more tins I should be glad." I have been supplying his battery, at his request, with English mustard, which they prefer to any other because it is in the form of powder, and consequently does not get mouldy.

Madame F—— showed me a letter from a soldier at the front, who says that he has been appointed "chef de pièce," or first gunner of one of the new pneumatic guns, and he adds: "Perhaps you are not aware that we now have these guns." No mention has been made of them so far in the French Press.

*Oct. 30th.*—The great scandal connected with the "embusqués" has caught even Champrosay in its toils. A well-to-do doctor named Lombard, with an accomplice, who is a West Indian mulatto, of the name of De Saint-Maurice (born in the Mauritius), has apparently been providing, in exchange for a heavy fee, certificates of ill-health to soldiers who shirk going to the front. He and M. de Saint-Maurice were arrested some days ago together with several army surgeons, and some of their subordinates. Several of these shirkers are among the patients at the Champrosay convalescent hospital, and for the past few days there have been plainclothes policemen at the hospital making an investigation. To-day they arrested three of the patients, and have taken them off to Paris. One



of them had three medals, and had been wounded more than once at the front. He was furious. But he is charged with having paid 15,000 francs for the medical certificate which enabled him to get "spun," and to spend the last month or so at the Champrosay Sanatorium. Should this prove to be true, his fine military record will only serve as an attenuating circumstance.

The new Ministry is being received with a good deal of coldness, and a little suspicion. The atmosphere is charged with mystery, not less so in France than in England. The French are generally of the opinion that England has hung back unduly in the Serbian affair, and by her dilatory tactics, based apparently on diplomatic ignorance of what the situation really amounted to, has compromised the success of the Balkan expedition. In addition there is a constant talk of peace. This longing for peace is traceable to the middle commercial classes, who have only suffered in their pockets from the war—for the death of their relations seems to affect them singularly little—from the territorial elements in the army, and from the women. But apart from the mere desire for peace, irrespective of whether France is victorious or not, which is expressed by many people that one meets, there are unmistakable signs that peace negotiations of some kind or another are going on, and that the persons engaged in them, whether authoritatively or not, are nevertheless in a position to know the situation better than the readers of censored daily papers in France or England. On all sides the symptoms are visible. The German Emperor's promise of peace before the year is out may be a vain boast destined to encourage his

army, but that Ferdinand of Bulgaria should be absolutely convinced that, in his own words, "the war is approaching its end," is really very significant. Then there is the activity of Lord Haldane, which has provoked questions in the House of Commons, to which no frankly satisfactory answer has been given. And perhaps, more important than all, there is the attitude of the United States, which, by refusing to grant a loan of more than £100,000,000 on a guarantee of industrial orders, practically conveys an intimation that it will not continue to manufacture ammunition for the Allies for more than that amount. That is to be the length of Great Britain's tether. If she and her Allies cannot win the war on that, the United States will, as it were, "strike" to stop the war, and, of course, as the peacemaker she will add hugely to her power and prestige at Great Britain's expense. When the German Emperor recently announced that his wedding present to President Wilson would be of a priceless nature, it was obvious that he meant one thing: his gift would be peace. The United States cannot afford to see Germany really crushed, for she is too good a customer, and they know very well that the British "business man" is no patch on the German. The fleet that they propose to build is in view of coming, if necessary, to Germany's assistance, to save this valuable customer from being ground into the dust. The United States has all along expressed its ambition to be the peace arbiter in the present war; all her interests lie that way, and the strong desire for peace both in France and England is every day helping this ambition to be realised. The collapse of the British Empire, as at present con-

stituted, will be the inevitable result, but the Americans will be only too delighted to witness that, and with the statesmen that Great Britain has saddled herself with during the past few years it was a foregone conclusion long before the war.

*Nov. 1st.*—An intelligent adjutant at Hiorth's this evening, who is invalided at the sanatorium, recovering from scurvy (the result, he says, of eating frozen meat), maintained that the English were too well provisioned. They had a great deal more than they wanted, and their convoys were in consequence so huge and cumbersome and of such length as to frequently impede the manœuvring of the French troops. This adjutant, whose special duty it is to convey munitions to the soldiers at the front, quoted an instance when he and his carts were obliged to plunge through a ditch owing to the road being completely taken up by a monstrous train of British munition vans conveying cigarettes. The British drivers were very friendly and gave him a large box of cigarettes, and expressed cheerful amusement at his difficulties in getting past them. Again, where the French used two horses to pull a load the British required three or five? This might be more humane, for the French wore their horses out very rapidly, and they died like flies, but it complicated the advance. What struck him most about the British soldiers was their willingness to sell anything they possessed, kit and all, even to their spurs. On a visit that his captain had made to the British camp, they insisted that he should not go away empty-handed; he asked whether they had a spare horse

he could purchase, and they insisted on selling him one, slightly injured, for 5 francs !

The adjutant said that the British were slow and deliberate, and that General Foch had been heard to say when it was a question of the British supporting a French attack : " Let's hope to heaven that the order won't come when they are at tea ! " If they happen to be at tea, and their officers want them to make a move, they cry out cheerfully, " Five o'clock ! " and refuse to budge. He praised General Foch for the great diplomacy which he exercised in dealing with the British, and with Marshal French in particular, which had resulted in the most perfectly cordial and harmonious relations existing between the two armies. He added that though the British objected to being disturbed at their tea, it must not be supposed that when they did go forward they were any less gallant than the French.

Another thing that had struck the adjutant was the strength of the reserves that the British Commander-in-Chief insisted on having before venturing an attack, reserves furnished, as a rule, by the French, with the ready consent of General Foch. (I did not think it necessary to remind him that it was the failure of the French reserve, largely composed of the notorious 17th Corps, to come up to the scratch which had caused the failure of the great French advance in July.) An impression of the utter ruthlessness of the war, which the English papers, with their silly-billy tales about nothing in particular, have so entirely failed to render, was well conveyed by one or two anecdotes which he told us of scenes he had personally witnessed.

There was a captain that the men adored, for not only was he absolutely fearless, but he himself went out every night to "spot" or locate, "re-pérer," the German guns. He had succeeded by his own unaided observations in locating no fewer than thirteen of them, which were subsequently destroyed by the fire of his own battery. One day he came back after a successful sortie from the trenches with a prisoner, whom he captured with his own hands and had been obliged to wound before he would surrender. On reaching the trench the German made a move as if he were about to fall down in consequence of his wound, but in reality he had drawn a revolver from his pocket, and shot the captain in the back, killing him instantly. The rage of the men was indescribable. Not only did they immediately put the treacherous prisoner to death, a result which he must have foreseen, but at that moment sixty German prisoners were brought in under the guard of two sentinels. The two sentinels were driven off, and the sixty prisoners instantaneously massacred to the last man to revenge the captain. If the sentinels had protested they would have shared the same fate.

In another instance a captain had had his son killed before his eyes. The captain "seeing red" threw himself on the first German prisoner brought to the trench that day, and casting away his own revolver called on the Boche, who was a much bigger man, to defend himself. The Boche was apparently paralysed by fear, and did nothing, while the captain with his own hands strangled him to death, with his horrified men looking on, and not daring to interfere, for, as they quaintly remarked,

"If we had said a word, 'il nous aurez envoyé au bloc'" ("he would have given us prison").

*Nov. 2nd.*—At F——'s café a delivery man, who had been through all the first and recent phases of the campaign, related some of his experiences with a dramatic effect which was thrilling. I had not yet heard anything like it, for the majority of the soldiers back from the front, with the modern newspaper instinct for pleasing the listener in order to secure a sure audience, relate little griefs and miseries, readily understood, and nothing else, so that no grandiose conception of the war is derived from their narrations. This "livreur," who had clean-cut eyelids, narrowing to the temples, and shapely though coarse hands, was one of nature's artists. It is impossible to reproduce the impression conveyed by his marvellous improvisation. In any case, it held his audience spell-bound. One grasped that "seeing red" explains, if it does not excuse, the bloodthirsty encounters that take place on both sides, the details of which our namby-pamby Press is careful to gloss over in favour of fiddle-de-dee trash about how Tommy brews his tea. "The guns had blown up all the trenches," said the "livreur," "but in the lower regions of some of them, for the Germans construct them ten yards deep, there were still some Boches left. I entered one, and found in a cosy little chamber plastered with pictures, including a portrait of the Kaiser, a big German officer, a colonel. He had his hands up, and on the table was a pile of bank-notes—I am not exaggerating—as big as this," and the "livreur" doubled up the evening newspaper he held in his hand. "'Take

them !' said the Boche officer, 'and spare my life.' 'U-u-u-ug-h,' I answered, bringing my bayonet to the level of his chest. 'You think a French soldier can be bought like that?' 'Take them, take them !' yelled the Boche officer, 'they'll always be useful !' 'Not to you !' I answered, and I killed him ; and standing beside him was a lad, a Boche lad, fifteen perhaps, not more, his son I imagine. *I killed him too.*" And the "livreur" in red-hot style, but producing the impression of absolute veracity, detailed another scene which had taken place in the German trenches. He had entered one of them, which the French had taken, and there were nine Boches, who held up their hands, crying "Camarades !" "Camarades !" said the "livreur" grimly. "The Lebel bullet will go through ten men, and they were in Indian file. I took good aim at the first, and the whole nine fell—dead. The bullet went into the first man's chest, on the right side, and came out of the last man's back, just under the shoulder on the left, for the bullet deviates a little in its passage. Camarades indeed !" The "livreur" was bitter on the subject of the many acts of treason which had brought disaster on the French arms. For hours they were being accurately bombarded by the Boche artillery while their own guns fired short. This was due to the treason of a "capitaine observateur," who was signalling to them from a captive balloon. At last the French major grasped what was going on. The balloon was brought down with a whi-z-z-z by the electric apparatus attached to it. "Is that how you signal !" shouted the major, when the "capitaine observateur" stepped to the ground. "Traître !"

("Traitor!") and he shot him dead without more ado ("sans autre forme de procès"). He was an Alsatian named Arck. The papers found on him left no doubt as to his guilt.

*Nov. 3rd.*—At G——'s, with whom I dined, there was an officer who, in private life, is a well-known Paris surgeon. He has the rank of a lieutenant, and, on being mobilised, was first of all given the duties of a station-master. He is now employed at the Ministry of War, where he helps to classify the applications sent in by the wounded for indemnities and pensions, for the French Government has decided to deal with wounds received in war on much the same basis as injuries to workmen. So far two million applications have been sent in. Of course many of these are slight wounds, but it gives one an idea of the casualties which the French army has suffered up to date, of which no lists are published.

Paul Robert, the painter, famous for his "mots," says that the new Government has been christened "le Crépuscule des Vieux."\*

*Nov. 7th.*—The choice of M. Clemenceau as President of the Committee of the Senate for Foreign Affairs and of the Army Committee is not a move in the right direction. It shows that the Senate is out of touch with public opinion in France. On all sides I hear comments on this choice which prove how widely M. Clemenceau is now distrusted even by those who were his former supporters. The British and foreign Press still remains blind appa-

\* A parody of the expression "le Crépuscule des Dieux": the Twilight of the Gods.



rently to his moral and political deficiencies, which, however, are well expressed in an article in the *Action Française*, no echo of which, however, is likely to reach England, and more's the pity. "It will be difficult for him," says the *Action Française*, over the signature of M. Charles Maurras, "to recover from all his errors of 1906-1909," and the critic adds ironically, "but we consider it neither irrational nor immoral that he should thus be called upon to repair all, or in part, what he has destroyed. It is known that during his three years of reign the military organisation fell to its lowest depth. Germany was increasing her expenditure in ammunition. At the same moment France was diminishing hers. The abrogation of the Messidor decree and the precedences dried up the recruiting of the military schools. The Charter of the Army was violated in favour of M. Picquart, who, as soon as he had been appointed Minister of War, was quick to transform his office, by his nonchalance and laziness, into a dormitory. Finally, at the moment that the Socialists and Radical-Socialists were exalting to the skies the rôle of the reserves, the drilling periods of the reserves and of the territorials were generously abridged. In the meanwhile maritime catastrophes were being added to the negligences of ten years, and our naval decadence was being precipitated.

"It is true to say that in revenge our foreign action was becoming singularly active in the East. We were taking a brilliant part in the Young Turkey revolution, the origin and principle of the present war. In consequence, the military policy of M. Clemenceau was disarming us at the precise moment that his diplomacy was teasing and arming our old adversary."

## CHAPTER XXVIII

*Buried furniture : Experiences of a stretcherman : The situation in the Argonne : A lack of men : Terrible losses : " Cignase " : Heroic death of the Marquis de Rochefort : " Sous and sous-marins " : French and German avions : " Malbrouck s'en va-t'en guerre ! " : The Highlander's " Compreny ! " : Horse steak : American coal for Europe : Increased optimism at the front : Tolstoi's " Peace and War " : The hysterics of Simon : Thirty shells to one : Starving German regiments*

Nov. 10th.—As a result of having changed to-day into a new flat with better light, I have discovered that L——, the landlord, when the Boches were expected, buried all his furniture and treasures, including money, " armoires à glaces," clocks, of which he has a collection which would make a Boche's mouth water, linen, and silver, in various corners of his estate. He disinters them " à fur et mesure," according as necessity arises. To-day he is busy unearthing a handsome wardrobe for the servant's room. But from all accounts, had the Germans got here, his precautions would have been unavailing, as they made a system of burrowing for treasure in all the gardens. Exactly where L——'s interments have been made is, of course, still his secret. My first night in the new flat was sleepless,

owing to the sheets being damp, and doubtless they had not been long hauled up from the bowels of the earth.

A letter from L—— announcing the arrival of the English mustard in good condition. "A few days ago we were buried by a 'marmite,' and narrowly escaped being asphyxiated by the Boches' gases."

Jean de B—— sends me a post card from Toulon to announce his embarkment for Serbia.

*Nov. 11th.*—In the afternoon I noticed a ruddy-faced, youthful figure hurrying across the bridge, wearing the flat-brimmed steel head-piece which makes the French soldier look as if he had stepped out of the period of Charles I, a Roundhead indeed, and he turned out to be fat old Pasquier, who before the war was employed as a gardener at the sanatorium. The war has rejuvenated him by at least twenty years. He won't, of course, admit this, for naturally he is eager for sympathy with the hardships he has undergone. After our greeting he rushed off to embrace his wife and child.

*Nov. 12th.*—Pasquier, who is a stretcherman in the Argonne, told me some interesting things to-day about the fighting around Verdun. He is convinced that the Germans can never break through on that front, and that the French are equally incapable of making an advance. The army in the Champagne will have to gain at least sixty kilometres before the Germans, to avoid envelopment, will be forced to retire from the Argonne. He was present at the storming of Vauquois, a height which

the French now hold. It enables them to dominate the German positions sufficiently to make a counter-attack futile, but a French advance would mean marching into a mouse-trap, for the Germans, solidly established in woods to the right and the left, would take the French in "enfilade." But he says that the French now have a superiority in artillery. The Crown Prince is still believed to be in command in the Argonne. The misfortune of the French army from the beginning was its lack of reserves. At the battle of the Marne, if the French had had sufficient reserves to be able to push forward promptly, they would have driven the Germans beyond the Meuse. General Gouraud he characterised as a butcher because he forced his troops to advance without sufficient backing; the result was slaughter without victory. General Serrail, he said, was no better. Both generals had won their spurs in the colonies and had no conception of European warfare. They had been accustomed to head charges against coloured natives, who ran away, but the Germans were tenacious, and held their ground. If the first charge was repulsed and there were no reserves with which it could be repeated disaster ensued. Five charges had been necessary to take the height of Vauquois. Since the departure of Generals Gouraud and Serrail, their successor, General Humbert, had arranged no fewer than six successive lines of defence, and things went better. But Pasquier says that France is beginning to lack men. His own regiment, the 31st Infantry, has already been completely reconstituted five times. The depots are completely depleted, and it is to the Midi that the army is now looking for supplies

of men. Unfortunately the soldiers from the Midi have not proved to be very good fighters.

Pasquier spoke in high terms of the assistance given in the attack on Vauquois by a British armoured train with two very powerful guns, that made a great ravage among the enemy. The guns were clamped to the rails, and held in position by two engines pushing against them at either end with all their force. After each shot the train hid under a neighbouring tunnel.

The forest of Argonne is almost completely destroyed. If a tree happens to be in the way which more than two men would be required to fell, it is cut down by mitrailleuse fire.

The successful assault of the Vauquois hill had placed eight thousand men "hors de combat." The stretchermen were forbidden to go to the rescue of the wounded during a bombardment. This order emanated from their medical officers, but in point of fact it was often disobeyed at the request of the combatant officers. In the papers the Germans are often sneered at for dosing their men with ether before an attack. According to Pasquier all the alcohol dealt out to the French troops before attacking (and this with no sparing hand) contains ether. The mixture is known in soldier's slang as "cignase."

Nov. 14th.—Several natives of Champrosay are back "en permission," and their stories collectively tend to show that the "moral" of the French at the front is good. They all maintain that the French artillery is now superior to the German. One of them declared that the 75 is far more effective

than the mitrailleuse, and to all intents and purposes as easy to handle and displace. Also they are agreed in this: that at the commencement of the war the French army was lacking in everything, but now is as well and even better equipped than the Germans. They have no doubt that the Germans can never break through the French lines on the Western frontier, and it is only a matter of time for the Germans to be driven out of France and Belgium. It is all a question of artillery ammunition and guns—and, of course, men. The French made the mistake at first of guarding their first line of trenches with too close formations. This led to much avoidable loss. Now that the line has been thinned down, in the proportion of about one man to the former five or six, the defence is just as effective, and the loss much less. The French have learned the value of successive lines of reserves.

Pasquier told a fine story of the heroic death of the Marquis de Rochefort, a major in his regiment, in the storming of the Vauquois hill. He fell mortally wounded, and the stretchermen ran up to carry him to the rear. "No!" he shouted, "it's not down there that I want to be buried, but up there!" And he ordered the stretchermen to follow the storming regiments to the top of the hill, which, to their credit, they did in a hail of shrapnel. And it is on the top of the victoriously captured hill that the major has his grave.

*Nov. 15th.*—The lack of copper money is causing great inconvenience here as in Paris. It is a mystery that nobody can explain—this scarcity of sous. This morning Madame F—— declared inno-

cently, that it was because all the sous had been requisitioned by the Ministry of Marine. "Why?" asked one of her customers, who prides himself on never falling into verbal traps. "Pour faire les sous-marins."

The "permissionnaires" are agreed that the French aeroplanes are superior to the German. The German airmen are less courageous than the French. There is, however, a German type of scouting avion, carrying bombs but no mitrail-leuse, which has much more powerful motors than any French avion, and trusting to these it does not take flight, but often dashes at a fantastic speed over the French positions. The French, however, have now an excellent gun with which to deal with it when it does not fly too high. It is within range of this gun when it flies sufficiently low to take useful observations.

Nov. 16th.—The wild applause, which apparently greeted Mr. Winston Churchill's farewell speech in the British House of Commons yesterday, finds no re-echo here. It is a fact that the French are thoroughly disgusted with Mr. Churchill and his methods, and it is only out of tactfulness that they do not say so more plainly. He offended the whole French Navy at the beginning of the war by telling it that its place was at Malta, and by practically ordering it to stop there. I have in my possession a letter from a French naval friend, a "lieutenant de vaisseau," since killed at the head of a company of Fusiliers Marins near Dixmude, describing the anger with which the French fleet was filled at this inaction, inexplicable, and in the result proved

to be foolish. The *Journal* to-day says, in a tone which is easily interpretable to any one knowing the French, "M. Winston Churchill passe de la politique au métier des armes. Il part en faisant claquer les portes" ("Mr. Winston Churchill passes from politics to the profession of arms. He leaves slamming the door"). The italics are mine. The underlined expression shows that the French are not taken in by the silly stories sent over by the agencies about Mr. Churchill's brilliant military record. "Malbrouck s'en va-t'en guerre, Mironton, mironton, mirontaine; Malbrouck s'en va-t'en guerre, Mais ne sait quand reviendra." This old French political song is what the Parisians are ironically whistling to themselves over the announcement of Mr. Winston Churchill's departure for the front.

A card with a deep black border from poor Madame N—— of Nice, whose stepson was killed at the front, in answer to my letter of condolence. She has written on it, "Merci, mon grand ami, de vos si affectueuses condoléances. Nous sommes bien tristes, bien désespérés. Affectueusement, B. N."

*Nov. 17th.*—In one of the halfpenny papers which reaches here, there is an optimistic article by a Scotch writer, which contains this extraordinary phrase: "The Germans cannot continue expanding their fighting-line *without feeling the pinch.*" Bulls are evidently not the monopoly of Irishmen.

The *Action Française* continues to bring forward retrospective facts which prove the extraordinary extent of the mischief wrought by M. Clemenceau during his Ministry from 1906 to 1909, which has been one of the direct causes of the war. According



to M. Bénazet, parliamentary reporter of the War Budget (reporter in this sense is the title given to the Deputy appointed by the Commission of the Chamber to report to it on the Budget), the sums voted for war purposes in France fell from 137 millions in 1906 to 92 in 1907, then to only 60 in 1908, and to 66 in 1909. It was only in 1910 that they rose to 95 millions. During these three years, Germany, on the other hand, spent 193 millions against 92 in France; in 1908, 241 millions against 60 in France; and in 1909, 215 millions against 66 on the French side—a total of 431 millions more than the French. With this sum, said the reporter, France could have furnished herself, like Germany, and at the same time, with a modern material of heavy artillery, “similar to that which establishes her present superiority.” “And it is this man [Clemenceau],” continues M. Charles Maurras, “loaded with these enormous mistakes . . . who is to have a voice on the question of the responsibilities of the war.” Clemenceau is the French Haldane, but I doubt whether Lord Haldane still conserves the credit in France which M. Clemenceau seems to in England. The Frenchman is always more disposed to break than to make an idol. In the meanwhile Lord Haldane, imitating M. Clemenceau in this respect, continues to give his advice on military matters, as if his previous record justified public confidence in his views, and he has even gone so far as to declare that but for the information which he gathered in Berlin in 1912, and communicated privately to his colleagues of the Cabinet, Great Britain would have been totally unaware of Germany’s bellicose intentions. This

great secret was the common property of everybody in France and England who had any knowledge of Germany, and the above figures, which date from 1906, would have sufficed to reveal the secret even to those very numerous people in England who, owing to defective education, speak neither French nor German, among these being—according to the French papers—Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, and Mr. Lloyd George. But on the strength of this amazing revelation Lord Haldane claims that Great Britain was warned in time, and that he is consequently the saviour of Calais. In fact, but for Lord Haldane, Paris would have been captured and England invaded. Who saved Calais? I, said Lord Haldane, I, with my long bow, I saved Calais!

*Nov. 18th.*—The “*permissionnaires*” who are here concur in the belief that the chief effort of the Germans on the Western front is still to capture Dunkirk, with the view of reaching Calais; but they are convinced that it is impossible for them to break through the French lines. One of them said to me to-day: “We have had practically to give up attacking the German trenches even with hand grenades. Every time we take a trench the Germans recapture it by a counter-attack in a few hours.” This soldier, whom transformed by his uniform I had difficulty in recognising as Louis, a gardener who did odd jobs for me before the war, complained that the raising of the soldier’s pay from one halfpenny to twopence halfpenny per day was but a fallacious advantage, for at the same time the Government had suppressed the rations of chocolate, and one out of the two

"quarts de vin," which were previously doled out. A quart is not a quart, but the quarter of a quart. Consequently soldiers without money either go without half their wine and drink the local water, which is poisonous, or buy wine at a ruinous price. The soldier who had no money was thus much worse off than before. Louis and his comrades have been much amused by the commercial instincts of their British allies, more particularly of the Scotch. "You say to a Highlander, for instance, 'Can you spare us a leg of mutton?' 'Compreny pas!' replies the 'bonneted lad.' The French soldier lifts two fingers: 'Deux francs!' he says. 'Compreny,' replies the Scotchman and comes back with the joint." He said that the kilted troops were splendid soldiers, and that all the British were remarkable for their sang-froid and tenacity. The only thing British which the Frenchmen thoroughly disliked was the frozen meat which came from Australia. It was tasteless, very difficult to chop up, and the French cooks did not properly know how to prepare it.

*Nov. 19th.*—Adjutant B——, who is back at H——'s on convalescent leave for a fortnight, confirmed Louis' story about the deficiencies of frozen meat. He much preferred horse, of which there was no great lack, for whenever a wounded horse had to be killed it was used as meat. No horse was eaten in the British lines, but sometimes the Frenchmen would invite their British comrades to a meal and give them succulent "beefsteaks of horse." The Tommies were loud in their praise, for the characteristic of horse-steaks is their abundance of red

gravy. And this is what, as a rule, the Englishman likes. He is not particular about flavour. They are "saignants à l'anglaise." It was only after the feast was over that the Frenchmen revealed to their guests what they had been eating. The British often invited the Frenchmen to tea, and gave them quantities of jam, a much appreciated treat. The British soldiers could generally be induced to barter a pot of jam for a glass of rum. In fact at first they bartered away everything they possessed, but they are now punished if they do. Adjutant B—— noticed that the British were much more exuberant, gayer, and noisier than the French, which was a reversal of all generally accepted ideas as to the differences between the British and French temperaments. The British were always cheerful, always larking and laughing, while the French maintained a much more solemn and taciturn demeanour, due perhaps to older habits of military discipline.

Adjutant H——, who has been visiting friends at the Issy-Moulineaux Aerodrome, says that the average of deaths among the French aviators is four a day.

*Nov. 21st.*—My American friend X Y Z visited me to-day on his return from America. He says that the Americans have no conception of what the war is, nor have they grasped the undoubted fact that the Allies are fighting the battle of America. The American coal-mine owners with whom he is in touch would like to sell their coal in Europe, but the freights are prohibitive. These high freights are largely the result of British jealousy. An invasion of the European markets by American coal

would be a serious thing for Great Britain, and for the present at any rate all the carrying trade is in British hands. At the present moment the Italians would be very willing to purchase coal and cattle from America, for they had very improvidently sold all their coal and cattle to the Germans before going to war. When I asked him to explain what he meant by the British fighting the battle of America, he said that the victory of the Germans would mean the loss to the United States of her commercial and political predominance in the Western hemisphere, for the Germans would then be in a position to practically annex South America, where their influence before the war was beginning to be paramount. The United States are doing all they can to take the place in South America temporarily left vacant by the Germans, whose commerce the British have driven from the seas.

*Nov. 22nd.*—F—— has come back for a second period of six days' furlough, and is much more cheerful, though considerably thinner, than when he was here last. He says that the "moral" of the men at the front is now excellent, and they are no longer dismayed at the prospect of another winter's campaign. He says that of course no real progress is possible except by "coups de mains" of the nature of the great Champagne attack, and these require long preparation.

The rations of the men still left much to be desired, but F—— was not so critical as Louis was on the subject of the frozen meat, which was only distributed two days in three. The chief objection to it was that it was badly cut up in blocks which

defied ordinary culinary methods, but the pieces were good. Macaroni entered largely into the soldiers' menu, and as this had to be cooked in plain water it was not palatable, but the Arab troops liked it. The French soldiers, with the adaptability characteristic of the French as a nation, had now learned the art of war and required very little leading. This was fortunate, for all the professional officers apart from the territorials—all the brave men—had been killed. The officers now contented themselves by making a round of the trenches, asking whether all was right, and then retiring to the rear. They were mostly business men, shopkeepers and so forth, who had a sincere respect for their own skins. The result was that the men were now led by their non-commissioned officers, who, with some notable exceptions, were on terms of perfect comradeship with them, all being drawn from the same class. It was a happy family. F—— brought me as a souvenir a very pretty paper-knife, the handle made of a German bullet, in the apex of which was inserted, as a blade, a thin strip of the copper collar, or binding, of the German shell, shaped as a scimitar.

His job as a "ravitailleur" is much less dangerous than it was, for the Germans now no longer shell the provision convoys, this by tacit understanding with the French, who equally refrain. Many little compromises of this kind have grown up between the opposing armies. There is an exposed German position in the neighbourhood of Notre Dame de la Lorette which the French could shell at any time and kill off a hundred or so of Germans, but as the result would be the shelling by the Germans of a

similarly situated position on the French front, with an equal and aimless loss of life, nothing is done on either side.

*Nov. 23rd to Nov. 30th.*—A week mainly notable for political feelers on all sides, which show vaguely the nature of the intrigues which are going on beneath the surface. The military critics of three of the chief Parisian papers are clamouring for a unique military command, forgetting that this is only possible in Germany and Austria, because both of these countries have the same language and the same form of government. The real weakness of the Allies lies in the fact that the democratic governments of both Great Britain and France are hopelessly discredited from every point of view, and that it is the autocratic government of Russia that has really saved the situation. That these three governments could ever work sincerely hand in hand is, of course, out of the question, politically speaking. And because they are politically antagonistic they can never be, from the military point of view, wholly at one. Disunion is weakness. To eliminate this element of weakness it would be necessary to co-ordinate the four systems of government in order to establish a unique military control which would be unaffected by political intrigues. Here in France we have M. Clemenceau as President of the Committee of the Senate for the Army and also of the Committee for Foreign Affairs. Before this inquisitorial bar, which recalls the Committee of Public Safety in the time of the Revolution, the Chief of the Army, General Gallieni, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs are constantly being called upon

to explain themselves. The committee, which legally should only occupy itself with the civil administration of these two departments of state, arrogates to itself the right to criticise and demand information upon all matters concerning the military operations and the relations between the different governments of the Quadruple Entente. As it controls a majority in the Senate and a powerful cabal in the Chamber, the ministers do not dare to put it in its place. The consequence is that secrets of the utmost importance are communicated to about thirty politicians, in camera of course, but as most of these politicians are either journalists or in close touch with journals, this is equivalent to spreading the information to the four corners of the earth. The president of these two committees, M. Clemenceau, has already had his paper, *L'Homme Enchaîné*, suspended on several occasions for refusing to obey the censor. In England it is evident, from recent disputes in the Houses of Parliament, that a similar state of things prevails. How can cohesion be created out of such a tangle? Napoleon, faced by the same problem, found a way, but is there in France and England a single personality, either military or political, capable of imitating him? What General Bonaparte grasped was that the unique military command was only possible with political unity and the supremacy of the military command over politics. If he had failed to achieve this France would have fallen an easy victim to her foes, and there would have been no Napoleon the Great.

*Dec. 1st to Dec. 3rd.*—Days of wind and rain storms. Everywhere there is a deadlock, but it



is a deadlock which must result in the discomfiture of the enemy, if only, to quote Forain's now famous caricature, "the civilian stands firm." In this connection the most noticeable event is the appointment of General Joffre to be General-in-Chief of all the French armies in the different fields, in view, of course, though the papers do not say so, of the authority which he will be called upon to exercise in the General International Military Council which is in process of formation. Such a council would have been impossible if every General in chief command of an army were needed to form part of it. The ultimate result must also be to knock on the head the mischievous activity of the Senatorial Committees of the Army and of Foreign Affairs presided over by M. Clemenceau. For it is obvious that when General Joffre is in the confidence of and responsible to an International Army Council, he cannot submit to be cross-examined by a clique of French politicians, a proportion of whom are representatives of the Press. Parliamentarism will lose more prestige in consequence of this sudden move, the originator of which seems to be General Gallieni (with, of course, Poincaré at his back), than its adepts seem yet to have realised. Simultaneously with it come two curious bits of news from England and Germany respectively. The first is that an effort is being made in the British House of Commons to compose an independent party of patriots who will insist on the war being prosecuted with the utmost vigour. Should their effort be successful another change of Cabinet, equivalent to a revolution, will necessarily result. The greatest patriotic achievement of to-day, the goal at which every

earnest, honest-thinking Englishman should strive, is to bundle out of the Government the incompetents who largely compose it. There never was a greater moral fraud than their appeal to all parties to make a "sacred union," to face the enemy, and sink party differences, while they, behind the scenes, continue the old mean game, and keep the old shop going. Like the Bourbons after Waterloo, they have learned nothing and forgotten nothing.

The other interesting "tuyau" is supplied by the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, quoted in the *Petit Parisien*. The *Frankfurter Zeitung*, an influential Jewish soi-disant Liberal paper, applauds Herr Bethmann-Hollweg's statement that the object of the war has been attained, according to the programme which he set forth in 1914. France will no longer deceive anybody with her ideas of revenge, and England has been made to understand that while Germany does not seek naval hegemony, her one and only aim having been to acquire for all nations the liberty of the seas, England is showing herself every day more and more willing to accede to this desire. With this statement should be compared the declarations already made on the subject of the liberty of the seas by Sir Edward Grey, and the cryptic hint thrown out by "Polybe," the military critic of the *Figaro*, who is Joseph Reinach, already quoted in this Diary. It tends to show that Germany is nearly on her last legs. She is endeavouring through the *Frankfurter Zeitung* to feel for what would be the maximum terms of peace of the Allies, supposing she could get certain influences which she thinks are represented by Grey and his friends in England, and Reinach and his friends in France, to work in

her favour. She is pleading for peace, just in the same way that Napoleon pleaded for peace after the burning of Moscow. Oddly enough I had been reading a couple of days ago the second volume of Tolstoi's *Peace and War*, in which those negotiations of Napoleon are so picturesquely set forth. They represented the beginning of the debacle. History probably never repeats itself, but human psychology is always the same. The same psychology that moved Napoleon to demand peace "in the name of the French army" after the occupation of Moscow is moving the German Emperor to-day. He knew that he was beaten. Another coincidence. When the French army began its retreat from Moscow the Russian Government, after some hesitation, authorised the "guerre de partisans." It was this "guerre de partisans," or guerilla warfare, which brought about the final undoing of the French army. On the very day that I read the passage referring to it in Tolstoi, the Russian official "communiqué" used the expression "partisans" for the first time since this war has begun, and used it to describe the capture by "our partisans" of the whole General Staff of a German division, together with its General in chief command, which was carried out behind the German lines. H—— asked me what do the Russians mean by "partisans," and being fresh from the perusal of Tolstoi's great description of the French retreat in 1814 I was able to tell him. The same word has caused much curiosity in France, and a correspondent of one of the Paris papers has been at pains to explain that "partisans" are *regular* troops who act on their own initiative and have special knowledge

of the localities in which they operate. Tolstoi's description is this: "The campaign known under the name of the *guerre de partisans* began after the French had entered Smolensk. Even before the Russian Government had officially recognised the 'guerre de partisans,' the Cossacks and the Moujiks were exterminating by thousands the marauders and the foragers, killing them as ruthlessly as *dogs do who tear to pieces the strange dogs whom they find on their masters' premises.*" The Kaiser's "imitation of his master Napoleon" is becoming suicidal in its faithfulness.

There is much that is of comparative interest to-day in Tolstoi's *Peace and War*, in particular the portrait that he draws of Koutouzoff, the aged Commander-in-Chief, chosen by the people, and in opposition to the Tsar's wishes, who, when the news is announced to him that the French are in retreat, turns his face to the wall, bursts into tears, and exclaims: "Russia is saved: I thank thee, Lord!" Koutouzoff, however, is an old Russian, and he fails to understand the full import of Napoleon's offers of peace, and the evacuation of Moscow. Tolstoi writes: "The Tsar's discontent was increased at Wilna by Koutouzoff's obstinacy in not understanding the 'raison d'être' of the new campaign. When the Emperor said to the officers surrounding him, 'You have saved not only Russia but Europe,' all understood that the war was not terminated. Alone Koutouzoff would not understand it thus, and expressed his opinion by saying that a new campaign could neither better the situation of Russia nor augment her glory, but, on the contrary, would compromise the former and diminish

the latter. He strove to prove to the Emperor that it was impossible to recruit new troops, spoke of the privations endured by the people, of the risk of facing a check. . . . The words Europe, equilibrium, Napoleon, meant nothing to Koutouzoff; he could not understand them." There are plenty of Koutouzoffs both in England and France, while in neutral countries the two most prominent Koutouzoffs are Mr. Wilson and the Pope. Any one who is in favour of an indeterminate peace, which does not definitely overthrow Kaiserism, just as Bonapartism was overthrown a hundred years ago, would do well to re-read the history of that period, and for the Russian part of it there is no more luminous guide than Tolstoi.

*Dec. 4th to Dec. 5th.*—England will win if she fights her own battles, but not if she gets the Jews to fight them for her. This is an obvious fact to which I have already drawn attention in this Diary, and a further proof of it is furnished in the hysterical scene created in the House of Commons by Sir John Simon. These neurasthenic, rhapsodical, mentally ill-balanced Solomons are not people to whose hands (which are generally waving in the air when their thumbs are not in the arm-holes of their waistcoats) should be entrusted the interests, let alone the fate, of England. Simon, to judge from the newspaper accounts, made more noise over his personal grievance against a certain halfpenny paper in England than has been called forth so far as a Ministerial utterance by any of our national woes, or by all the atrocities committed by Germany in the invaded countries.

The effect on the French Parliament of the appointment of General Joffre to be Commander-in-Chief of all the French armies is already beginning to make itself felt. General Gallieni has dealt a severe snub to the Committee of the Army, presided over by M. Clemenceau, by refusing to give any explanations over and above the plain text of the measure. The Committee is squirming. It will be interesting to see whether the Military or the Parliamentary party will win. Something similar must inevitably happen in England. Nothing more curious or more significant than this international struggle for supremacy between the talkers and the workers has yet been seen in the history of Europe. And the war can only be won for the Allies on condition that it is the talkers who yield. But the talkers are terrible stickers, and for the time being at any rate they have the whole administrative organisation both of France and England in their hands. The workers have the army with them and all the people who recognise that their individual as well as national salvation depends on winning the war.

*Dec. 6th.*—G——, whom I met this afternoon, confessed to a feeling of disquietude, modified by a kind of mystical conviction that in the long run, come what may, the Allies must win. He told me—and he is specially well situated to know—that the Japanese are showing eagerness to join in by sending an army or a fleet to the defence of Egypt, but whether their proposition will be accepted or not is still under discussion. He told me that most of the French troops have been withdrawn from Gallipoli, where the English were also in much less

force than at the beginning. So far as ammunition was concerned the superiority of the Allies over the Germans was now overwhelming. The proportion was thirty shells to one. But the advance on the Western front would involve enormous preparation and a great sacrifice of men. The Germans had organised immense ravines and vast circular excavations, filled with mitrailleuses, and other artillery defences which no bombardment could completely destroy.

G—— agreed with me that the supreme advantage of the Germans was that they had succeeded in combining a force of organisation, unattained by any of the Allies, with that other great force, the greatest of all, which is stupidity. In France and in England we are neither as clever nor as stupid as the Germans, and this is one of the chief reasons of our weakness. They have co-ordinated their greatest quality with their worst defect.

*Dec. 8th.*—Madame L——'s son, who is here for six days' furlough—he is a gunner in the navy, attached to the Fusiliers Marins in Flanders—was bitter on the subject of the "Mokos," this being the nickname given to the Southerners, and more particularly the natives of Toulon. The cook who prepared their meals in the trenches was a "Moko," and it was not until he had been beaten almost out of recognition by his comrades and ducked in the river that he consented to rise at the proper time in the morning and keep himself and his cooking utensils clean. This acute hostility between the North and the South is curious to note, and one wonders whether after the war there will be a

definite political outcome from it. The same gunner related the story, already noted here, of the Alsatian officer, in the observation balloon, signaling to the French gunners to shorten their fire, thereby saving the Germans from annihilation at a critical moment of the great attack in Champagne, and of the infuriated French major shooting him dead as soon as he was brought with his balloon to earth. The gunner thought that this was a mistake, for the Alsatian officer, before being formally executed as a traitor, might have been induced to make interesting revelations. In his condemnation of the "Mokos" the gunner included the Corsicans, which was a surprise to me, and contrary to what I have hitherto believed, but he maintained that all "Mokos" were equally worthless as soldiers, and the officers were no better than their men. In common with several other soldiers that I have talked to he gave 150,000 as the number of French "hors de combat" after the battle of Champagne.

*Dec. 12th.*—A letter received to-day from L. W——, who is first gunner in a battery of "105 long" at the front, though it gives a lamentable description of the state of the trenches nevertheless contains a very satisfactory piece of information, which is in the highest degree symptomatic. He writes: "The poor soldiers here are in a sad state. We have mud and water up to the knees, and this both day and night. The trenches crumble down under the weight of the water, and the Boches are in the same condition. The other day the Boches were so extenuated with fatigue and hunger that they killed their officers and surrendered in a great



proportion, but we, thinking we had to do with some machination on their part, let the first lot come on, but the mitrailleuses dealt with the rest. According to what the prisoners said the whole Boche regiment wanted to surrender." To kill their officers in the madness of hunger and fatigue and then to surrender "en masse" reveals a condition which no French or British regiment has yet reached, and it would look as if the Germans were experiencing great difficulties in the matter of provisionment.

## CHAPTER XXIX

*Poitiers : French and German prisoners—a contrast : Fiendish cruelty of Boche surgeons : Petting the Boche in France : “ Victory with clean hands ” : Habits of the refugees : The British soldier’s discipline : “ To the bitter end ” : Poitiers and the Picts : Etruscan origin of Niçois and Picts : Sobriety of Poitiers*

Dec. 15th.—“ There is no longer any doubt in my mind,” said the chief surgeon ; “ it has been done on purpose. ‘ Les cochons ! ’ (The swine ! ) ” he muttered under his breath. “ Look at this ! ” He stripped the bedclothes off the pallid and shrunken body of a lad, who could not have been more than twenty years of age, and showed me his thigh. Shattered by a projectile, the thigh-bone had been allowed to set itself. The thick muscles, exercising a strong pressure on the surrounding tissues, had grown together without any kind of artificial direction, forming a huge misshapen conglomerate lump, extending from just below the hip to the knee, which was completely ankylosed, with the result that the leg was bent rigidly inwards at an angle of nearly forty-five degrees, and could never be made straight again. He was one of a batch of infirm, wounded French prisoners just repatriated from Germany. “ The most we

can do for him is to amputate above the fracture, for though he must inevitably be a cripple for life, he will perhaps be better with an artificial leg than getting about with a withered limb fixed in that position. Where were you wounded ? ” The white-faced lad, who wore that strange look of gentle, almost good-humoured, calm and resignation which I have noticed with so many of the French wounded, replied, “At Charleroi, at the beginning of the war.” “And apart from the ordinary dressing, did the German surgeons do anything to get the leg straightened ? ” “ *Nothing !* ” “One hesitates to believe that any members of our profession could be guilty of such fiendish cruelty, whether Boche or not,” said the chief surgeon. “It is so entirely contrary to all medical traditions, let alone the simple question of humanity, but if you ask my opinion as an expert I tell you frankly such treatment suggests the deliberate aim to cripple the patient for life, or, at the very least, intentional negligence, which amounts to the same thing. The shortening of the leg in this case amounts to 15 centimetres. A French surgeon would think himself dishonoured if the shortening, resulting from a compound fracture of the lower limbs, exceeded 2 centimetres, or 3 at the very outside.” The chief surgeon now called my attention to a patient whose fractured leg showed a shortening of only 10 centimetres. “This man,” he said, “was lucky. He had no confidence in the humanity of the German hospital staff, and so, though a shoemaker, he replied, when questioned as to his occupation in civil life, that he was employed in a shop. He said to himself, ‘If they know that I follow a seated trade

they will care nothing of what becomes of my wounded leg, but if they think they can put me to some sort of work in which the other leg will be of use to them, they may try to save it.'” His reasoning seems to have been correct, for the German surgeon supplied this patient—and he was the only prisoner in the ward who enjoyed this favour—with an extension apparatus, and for a time he was properly treated, but before the leg had been straightened the apparatus was taken away to be applied to a German patient and nothing further was done. “It is possible,” said the French surgeon, “that the German hospitals suffered from a shortage of these apparatus, but considering how well supplied they have been throughout the war with everything else it is not probable. In this case again I shall, I fear, have to amputate the man’s leg, but it seems a pity, for the foot, as you see, is still in good condition. To give you an idea of the incredible brutality with which some of the German surgeons conducted their operations, there is a patient here from whose thigh I removed this morning three splinters and a piece of shrapnel, which the Boche surgeons had not taken the trouble to extract. Before the man was chloroformed I noticed a hole in the tissues between the ankle and the tendon of the heel. Would you believe it? In order to extend the leg after the first operation the Boche surgeon had run an iron rod through the man’s flesh, adjusting on it a rough kind of pulley, the manipulation of which for extending the tissues and tendons was entrusted to an ignorant and brutal hospital orderly. Even with that savage method the patient has a shortening of 10 centimetres.”

This conversation took place at Hospital 39, at Poitiers, the chief surgeon being Dr. Malapert, one of the most famous operators in the French Midlands. His opinions were confirmed by Professor Guibbaud, chief physician and director of the hospital, who is also illustrious in his profession. Both spoke with the deliberation and restraint habitual to eminent men of science in civilised Europe, but their intense indignation was plain. It had been my privilege to accompany the Prefect of the department, Monsieur Marty, on a visit to the hospital, where he distributed sums of 10 francs to each of the patients from the invaded districts, whose families had been carried off into practically slavery by the Germans, and from whom they had received no communication since the beginning of the war. He announced to them that the French Government had decided that unless a full list of these civilian prisoners were furnished by the German Government, and the facility accorded to them of communicating with their relatives in France, all correspondence between the German prisoners in France and their relations in Germany would be suppressed. "In the meanwhile," added the Prefect, as he made his gift, "until you hear from your families it is my duty and a pleasure to take their place as far as possible." It was a touching scene.

When it was ended the Prefect invited me to accompany him on a visit of inspection to the German prisoners' camp, situated on a plateau in the outskirts of Poitiers—an invitation which has so far been extended to very few non-official Englishmen, if indeed to any. Here I was introduced to the

commandant of the camp, an elderly officer, Major Vitry, wearing the Cross of the Legion of Honour and the Military Medal. Stern and stiff in his military bearing, a look of paternal benevolence nevertheless beamed through his pince-nez. "Achtung!" shouted the German "unteroffizieren" to whom the ordinary discipline of the camp is entrusted as we entered the long sheds in which the men's beds are placed in rows. Each prisoner jumped to attention in the extraordinarily stiff attitude which is traditional in the German army. They were mostly thick-set, undersized men, but they all looked perfectly healthy, clean, and happy. Apart from that, their faces were almost expressionless, though I fancied I could detect flickers of hatred in some of their eyes, concealed with all the obsequious skill peculiar to Boche treachery. The beds were long and large, and amply provided with warm coverings. With the aid of the broad high shelves on the walls behind them, each man had established a cosy little "chez soi," a sort of snuggerly for himself. Boxes containing toilet utensils, spare garments, letters, and souvenirs, filled them, and each was marked with the individual prisoner's name, and the designation of his regiment. There was a profusion of photographs of the dear ones at home, enframed with green leaves, or stuck round with faded flowers. "Indeed," said the commandant, "I have had to restrain these exhibitions somewhat, for they threatened to invade the dormitories to such an extent that it would have been impossible to keep them clean." There was only one prisoner in bed, sitting up. In the course of working out of doors he had suffered a slight

injury to his foot. "I have only three sick men," the commandant informed us, "out of 1200 prisoners who form the camp, and that is a lower average than for any French regiment in time of peace. Their employment largely consists of unloading, at the railway station, consignments of iron rails, which are afterwards used in the manufacture of shells. You see," he added, almost apologetically, as if his natural goodness needed some excuse, "I feel that the healthier and happier they are the greater the sum of useful service which they will be able to furnish. For that reason I even allow them to read certain papers. For instance, the *Illustration*, which contains excellent pictures and gives an account of the war, which is retrospective and in the nature of a résumé."

We visited the kitchens. A huge cauldron was filled with excellent beef in the process of stewing, and very nice it smelled. In another equally big cauldron was a smoking vegetable stew. The cooks were prisoners, wearing white caps and aprons, quite professional-looking chefs. "The Germans," said the commandant, "differing in this respect from the French soldier, do not like to have their meat cooked in the soup. They prefer to cut the meat up into bits, and put it into the soup after both have been prepared separately. They say it tastes much better, and 'ma foi!' I am not sure that they are not right. I let them do as they please." Next to the kitchen was a well-lit and warmed operating-room, with a reversible dentist's chair made by the prisoners themselves. "The prisoners are always accompanied by interpreters when they pass the doctor's visit," the commandant told us, "and I

have a German dentist for them, and two German nurses. To keep them from moping, which might perhaps injure their health, I have organised a little library, which is under the managership of a prisoner who in civil life—he comes from Karlsruhe—is a painter. He has made a number of drawings, which amuse his comrades and show a certain talent.”

We visited another shed, where each prisoner has a special locker where he keeps the food and gifts that are sent to him from friends in Germany. To prevent thieving it is under the care of an “unter-offizier,” whom the commandant looks upon as specially trustworthy. In civil life he had been a station-master. “We also have a special department for prisoners,” explained Major Vitry, “who show signs of epidemic disease and require to be kept for a time under observation.”

At the request of the Prefect, I questioned some of the men in German as to whether they were satisfied with their treatment, or had any complaints to make. Without exception they said that they were, and most of them very emphatically. Only one of them, a Feldwebel from Mannheim, replied, “In general, yes,” but he could not or would not mention any particular grievance. As we left the camp the commandant told me that the American Ambassador, Mr. Sharp, who had recently inspected it, had assured him that his camp for perfect sanitation and general organisation rivalled, if it did not surpass, any that he had visited. I could well believe it.

“I am not sure that he does not spoil them,” said the Prefect as he drove me back to the Prefec-



ture in his car. The commandant is the father of a family and he treats the prisoners as his children. "But then you see, we French . . ." Neither of us felt it necessary to complete the phrase, for each had in his mind's eye the vision of what we had seen at the prisoners' camp contrasted with the horrors witnessed at the hospital. But at the luncheon which followed, Madame Marty, the charming Prefectess, supplied the missing formula. "It is not," she said, "because the Germans are brutes that we, the civilised French, should imitate their brutality. Our final victory will be doubly complete if we gain it with clean hands."

*Dec. 16th.*—Although not to any great extent a manufacturing town, Poitiers is making a good show with shells. The smallest factories are at work, and the production is now 2500 per day, of which 250 are of large calibre. This gives some idea of the activity prevailing all over France in the production of munitions.

The ancient depot of the Prévôté, with its mediæval architecture, has been converted into an asylum for French refugees. The authorities frankly admit that these are not of a high class, but they are treated with benevolence. I visited their quarters with the Chief of Police, a most courteous Niçois, Monsieur Richelmi, who knows the story of every stone in Poitiers. The refugees were seated at long tables eating an excellent bean-stew, in the dark, as it happened, for the supply of petroleum had suddenly run short, but they were evidently quite contented with their lot. During the afternoon we had met a party of these refugees,

who had greeted the Chief of Police cheerfully with, "We've come back, you see!" The chief subsequently explained to me that he had found work for them the previous day, but they had already abandoned it. It appears that when they consent to accept a job they are given a new pair of trousers, a new jacket, a new shirt, and a second-hand overcoat. Once they have secured these treasures they can be relied upon not to work very long. Another favourite trick with them is to ascertain on arriving what are the trades lacking to the town to which they have been drafted. "Any mines here?" "No." "Ah, that's a pity. I'm a miner." Or, "No glassworks, I suppose?" "No." "Most unfortunate; I'm a glass-blower." "The fact is," said the Chief of Police, "they are most of them better off here than they were in their own homes before the war. They are fed, clothed, and boarded, and they are not obliged to work, 'So why should we?' they say. Which, after all, is very human."

In the course of conversation with persons in a position to speak with authority I heard an opinion expressed of the British Army, which confirmed what I have already heard from ordinary soldiers, whose views on the subject had, however, less individual weight. The French recognise to the full the splendid fighting qualities of their English Allies, but the eternal refrain is that *they are not sufficiently disciplined*. They do not obey their officers in the unquestioning way that the French do. The evil consequences are more harmful to themselves than to anybody else. Their besetting sin apparently is the determination to shave, take tea, or attend Divine Service when the particular

time for these functions has in their opinion arrived, without reference to the military exigencies of the moment. The Germans know this and take advantage of it. They plan their attacks when the British trenches are weakened by the absence of a majority of the men in the rear engaged in satisfying one or other of these national needs. The result is that the men left in the trenches are unable to defend them, and are either captured or slaughtered. Their comrades do not hesitate to counter-attack with the utmost gallantry, and retake the trenches, but a large and quite unnecessary loss of life is the consequence. One instance was quoted to me in which the Germans made a sad mistake. It was the British tea-hour, and they thought they could safely attack, but they were not aware of the fact that the British trenches had been entirely evacuated a short time previously, the 'Tommies' having been relieved by French troops, and sent to the rear for several days' rest. They were accordingly met, to their surprise, by a full complement of French defenders, and driven back with terrible loss.

The French now thoroughly appreciate the enormous importance of the British naval effort, and the extent to which it has bottled up the Germans. From all sides I hear this expressed. The Chief of Police at Poitiers dwelt upon it with pleasure. He added this: the French, in his conviction, were now determined to fight the war out to a victorious finish. After the first defeats not a few of them were disposed to say, when the Germans were investing Paris: "Well, after all, we have been beaten, let us make peace." But now that they know *what the German is*, they would go

on fighting, even if Paris were to be captured, to the very end. The Poitevins, the inhabitants of this old province of Poitou, of which Poitiers is the capital, are the ancient Picts, the Pictavi mentioned by Cæsar. They are a race of somewhat mysterious origin, and I remember the late Grant Allen, one of the most learned of ethnologists, relating to me the reasons for his belief that they were of Etruscan, and therefore probably of Semitic derivation. This would make them first cousins to the native Niçois, for the most recent investigations tend to show that the Niçois language, by its frequent terminations in *esco*, is an offshoot from the Etruscan. It has the same in common with Erse, the ancient language of Ireland (example: *usquebaugh*, whisky). M. Richelmi, himself a Niçois, was not prepared to accept these conclusions absolutely. He said that the Poitevins were a cool, courageous people, that the proportion of drunkards in the population was so small as to be negligible (he himself is a total abstainer from all stimulants, to the extent even of not drinking tea), there was no rowdyism amongst them, and in the night one never heard the sound of singing in the streets or issuing from their houses. In fact, being a southerner, he had felt this lack of vocal melody after first arriving in Poitiers. The Poitevins are deeply religious and regularly attend Mass, but this does not prevent them from electing Republican Deputies. Clearly they are a canny people, and I was struck by the number of faces met with in the streets which strongly resembled the best Lowland Scotch type, both of the dark and the fair variety.

## CHAPTER XXX

*New guns and old : The Director of the Paris Mont-de-Piété : " Haven't you got a watch ? " " No, sir, you've got it " : A Luxemburg ironfounder's information from Berlin : Germany's gold only enough for six months : Shirkers : The Crown Prince's narrow escape near Montfaucon : The French working man and his military duties : What the artisan is paid : The N——'s broken home : Deaths that sanctify : Looking backward*

CHAMPROSAY, Dec. 17th.—L. W——, when he was here on furlough, said that the 105 mm. long gun—he is chief gunner in a battery of these guns at the front—was superior to the famous 75, on account of its longer range, and was gradually taking its place. I now learn on indisputable authority that the French Government is manufacturing no more 75's, also that the French very heavy artillery and that of the Allies is still inferior to the German, but that this deficiency will be more than made up by the beginning of spring. The new heavy gun which is being manufactured by the Allies fires a shell of greater explosive force than that of the German 420, and is more easily handled and transported.

PARIS, Dec. 18th.—The Procureur-Général, M.

P——, related to-day at W——'s a curious adventure which befell the Director of the Mont-de-Piété shortly after the beginning of the war. At that time there was some fear of street disturbances in Paris. A mob in revolt has a natural tendency to turn its attention to the chief government pawnshop. M. Feuillant, the Director, was therefore on the alert, and as he slept on the premises he gave instructions to his valet that should there be a call on the telephone, even in the middle of the night, he should be immediately informed of it; it might be some warning communication from the Government. And it so happened that the very night afterwards, about three o'clock A.M. there came a terrific peal. The valet inquired: "Who are you? What do you want?" "Are you the Director?" "No, I am the valet." "Then you are no use to me, I must speak to the Director personally." "But is it important?" "Yes, very." "You can't tell me what it is?" "No, I must speak with the Director." Accordingly M. Feuillant was roused and came in his night-dress and slippers to the telephone. It was not in the best of tempers that he shouted: "Well, what is it? You know this is not a time to telephone except for a matter of the utmost gravity. Who are you, and what have you got to tell me?" "Are you the Director in person?" "Yes, I'm the Director, and what is it? Look sharp! You're keeping me waiting here, and I'm catching cold." "*Could you tell me the time?*" "The time! But you must be mad to ring me up in the middle of the night to ask such a question as that. Haven't you got a watch?" "No, sir, you've got it!"

It was also at W——'s that a curious statement was attributed by one of his friends to M. Podroem, the largest ironfounder in Luxemburg, who employs over 4500 hands. He was asked by the German authorities to manufacture shells for them, but declined to do so. "As many rails and wheels as you like," was his reply, "but no destructive engines." He was then invited to Berlin, in the hope that he might be persuaded. He stuck to his resolution, but in the course of his visit he came in contact with the principal financiers of Berlin, and they said to him, "*We know we are beaten* ; but Germany will make more than one final and desperate effort before she gives in, and in the meanwhile she will endeavour to kill as many of her enemies and cause the greatest destruction that she can. But she possesses only gold enough to pay for the provisions that she obtains from neutral countries for another six months. After that she will be unable to provision her army. Germany is already between the devil and the deep sea. If the population cannot be fed there will be a revolution ; if the troops are not fed they will surrender. After six months Germany will be unable to provision both. The letter from L. W—— describing the surrender of an entire German regiment, owing to hunger, and after killing their officers, is thus curiously confirmed.

CHAMPROSAY, Dec. 20th.—A wild-looking "poilu," with flame-coloured hair and beard, and glaring blue eyes, rushed into F——'s this afternoon, and having ordered the "syrup," which is the only refreshment the café proprietors are now

permitted to serve to soldiers before 5 P.M., he bawled out that what disgusted him beyond utterance was the sight of thousands of young men amusing themselves on the Paris boulevards who, owing to patronage, had succeeded in avoiding service at the front. He maintained that every man of whatever age, capable of practising a "métier" or trade, ought to be in the trenches. This soldier was labouring under a sheer optical delusion. Paris is *not* crowded with young men capable of serving in the trenches. Nor is any other town or district in France. Whether you enter a shop, a café, a railway station, the "métro" or tube, or a train, the only employés you will meet will be old men, boys, or women. The few exceptions are foreigners from neutral countries. But it is proof of the mischievous effect of the long and quite unjustifiable campaign that old M. Clemenceau has been carrying on in the *Homme Enchaîné*, in collusion with the anarchist Gustave Hervé in the *Bataille Syndicaliste*, against these imaginary "embusqués," or "shirkers," that excitable people imagine they see what does not really exist. This man, who is on furlough for a few days, will go back to the trenches, supposing that he has been serving in them—as he was unwounded and in the pink of condition, it is quite likely that he has never himself been near the front—and spread discontent and discouragement among his comrades. No wonder that the *Action Française*, by the pen of that eminent writer and undoubted patriot M. Charles Maurras, demands almost daily that M. Clemenceau and M. Gustave Hervé should be,



together with their newspapers, forcibly suppressed as public nuisances.

*Dec. 22nd.*—Michaud, the greengrocer of Ris, has returned to-day on furlough after sixteen months' uninterrupted service at the front. He has been both in the Argonne and at the battle of Champagne. He related the story, which I have already heard twice before, about the Crown Prince having been trapped near Montfaucon early in the war, and escaping solely owing to the treachery of the mayor of the commune. But he is the first eye-witness of these incidents that I have so far met. He was present, so he says, at the execution of the mayor. When the French soldiers reached the Crown Prince's quarters after their bird had flown they found such huge quantities of rich food and champagne that they overdid things? Shortly afterwards the Germans returned in force, surprised in their turn the French, many of whom were killed, owing to their not being in a condition to make good their escape. Michaud himself fled on a horse, but was so ill-fitted at the time to ride it that he fell off no fewer than fourteen times. At the battle of Champagne the French took 22,000 German prisoners, of whom 16,000 surrendered without a fight, but they advanced too far, without sufficient support from their reserves, and had to yield all but 500 metres of the 6 kilometres which they had acquired from the enemy. They lost many killed and wounded during this set-back. However, he is convinced that the French will "get" the Germans in the long run. It is only a question of time.

*Dec. 26th.*—The Ministerial utterance, known by an undisguised fiction (in which many people, however, still pretend to believe, notwithstanding that they know better) as the King's message, contains a repetition of that unfortunate catchword, filched from the enemy, "an honourable peace." It is characteristic of the present Government that the message contains not one word of regret or praise for the noble dead, or of sympathy and consolation for their surviving friends and relatives. The dead no longer vote. An honourable peace is a euphemism for a compromise, and it was in that sense that it was originally used twelve months ago by the German Emperor.

*Dec. 27th.*—The French papers give great publicity to Mr. George's speech yesterday to the British working men, and with characteristic tact they refrain from pointing out its glaring misstatements ; but in private, French people are expressing surprise that a responsible Minister should so absolutely travesty the truth in the interests of party. It is wholly untrue that the French working man set the example of renouncing, at the request of the Socialist Minister of Munitions, the rules and usages of the syndicates or unions. What is true, of course, is that the moment the war broke out every working man in France of military age became a soldier, and amenable to the strictest rules of military obedience. The same applies to the German working man. It was by taking advantage of this situation of the French working man that M. Briand crushed a dangerous railway strike some years ago, and earned universal praise in Great Britain, as

elsewhere, for so doing. He called the men to the colours. That he was able to do it is due to the fact that forty-five years ago, after the disasters of 1870, the Republican and, if you please, Democratic Government of France recognised this fundamental fact, that if a Government based upon universal suffrage is to be effective, universal suffrage must, in its turn, be based on the principle of universal service. At present the British Government draws huge sums from the public purse as wages for governing, and does everything except govern.

*Dec. 28th.*—At Corbeil, the landlady of the Hôtel des Petits Ponts, which is just opposite the great flour mills, said that the management of the Decauville works, the other huge industrial establishment in the town, paid workmen, who before the war earned ten francs a day, only eight sous, or fourpence, an hour. These are men, of course, who being mobilised are placed at the disposition of the Decauville works by the military authorities. What with the increased cost of living these are literally starvation wages, and some of the men who have families have been obliged to give up taking their board at this landlady's restaurant, cheap as her prices are. Their families, moreover, receive no allocation from the State, as is the case with the soldiers in the fighting-line. The consequence is that quite a number of them have actually applied to be sent back to the front. The Decauville works are supposed to be making a huge profit out of the difference between what the Government pays them and what they pay their workmen, but of

this I have no proof. They manufacture shells, rails, wheels, and of course their speciality, which is light railways, and the production goes on without the slightest intermission night and day.

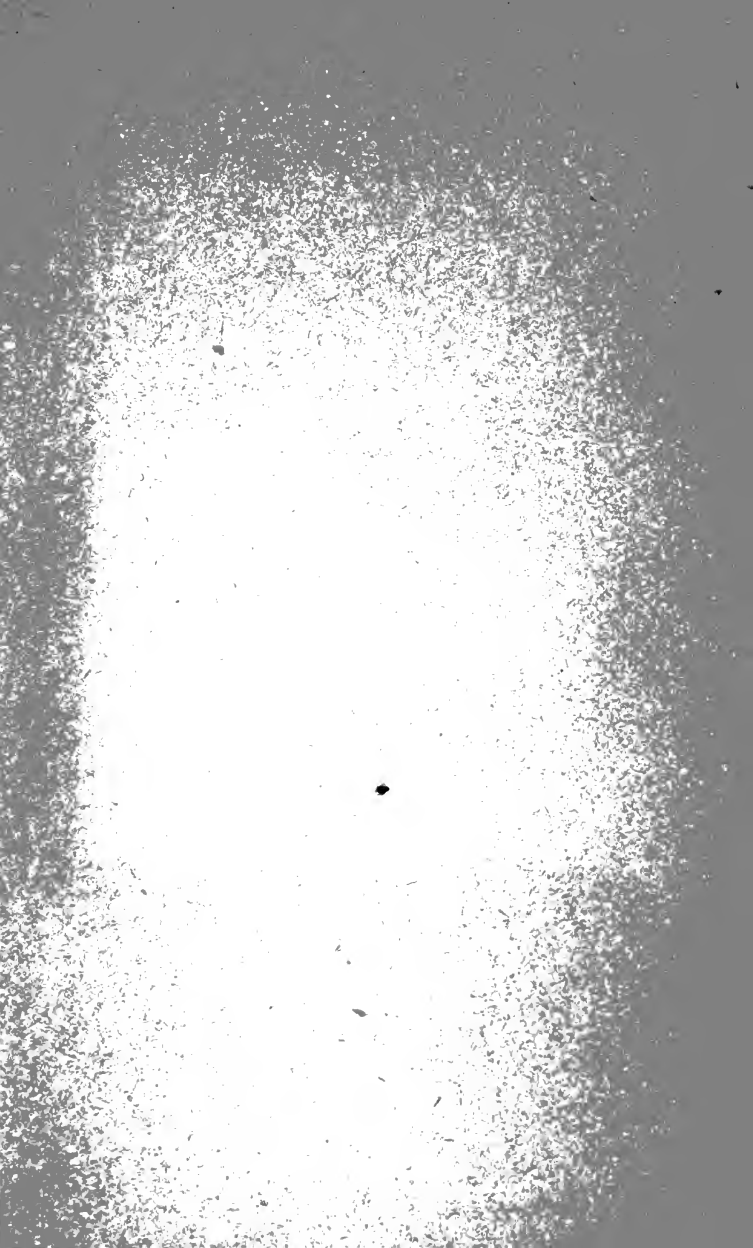
*Dec. 29th.*—I am reminded of the pleasant day spent at the beginning of this year with the N——s at Nice, with their son Maurice, who is now among the glorious dead. Another son dangerously wounded! Then poor little Pauline, the soubrette, carried off by typhoid fever. What a broken home! And there are hundreds of thousands like it. It was about her other son that Madame N—— was anxious then, and Maurice tried to console and reassure her. And it was he who was to die. I have written to her a few words of renewed sympathy. “Je sais qu’il est encore trop tôt pour vous adresser des paroles de consolation. C’est plus tard que vous recevrez celle-ci sûrement. L’auréole de sainte béatification qui rayonne de sa mort héroïque vous l’apportera. Ce sont des martyrs, ceux-là. Leur mort sanctifie, et c’est ainsi qu’on arrive à y penser avec résignation.”

*Dec. 31st.*—The Old Year goes out in an enigmatic frame of mind. None of the high hopes which attended its birth have been fulfilled. We know that we are stronger than our enemies in men and ships and money (the old jingo refrain which so tickled the Horse Collar Club), but we are obliged to admit their superiority in all that concerns intelligent government and administration. There is, however, a bright lining to the cloud. In France great and sincere efforts are being made to clean

out the Augean stables of bureaucracy, and in England—well, the situation in England reminds me of a visit I once paid to an institution for the training of “*enfants arriérés*,” or backward children, at Ermont-Eaubonne, in the neighbourhood of Paris. The Director was a Boche, and strangely enough, or perhaps not strangely at all, was the deputy mayor of the locality. His methods were ingenious, if a little brutal, and one that he described to me he was particularly proud of. A child that had never, in the language of the nursery, “taken notice,” or as the Director expressed it, *looked*, had been entrusted to him for treatment, and its parents, who were wealthy, had offered him a handsome sum of money if he succeeded in rousing its latent intelligence. After many unsuccessful experiments he tried the following. Placing himself at a considerable distance from the child he bowled at it little balls made of paper, hitting it each time on the nose. This went on for some time without effect, but one day the Director’s wife heard a great shout, and a moment afterwards the Director rushed into her presence joyously exclaiming, “The prize is ours! The child has *looked*!” And if one examines retrospectively the events of the past year, the British Government seems to have been much in the position of this child. It has been undergoing a slow process of awakening. Events have been constantly hitting it on the nose, just like the little balls of paper employed by the Director of the Backward Children’s Institution at Ermont-Eaubonne. Reconstitution of the Cabinet—ping—resignation of Lord Haldane—pong—resignation of Winston Churchill—ping—resignation of Lord

Fisher—pong—recruiting by moral pressure—ping  
—mobilisation of factories—pong—resignation of  
Simon—ping—adoption of obligatory service certain  
—pong. Hurrah ! At last ! The British Govern-  
ment has *looked* !

THE END







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